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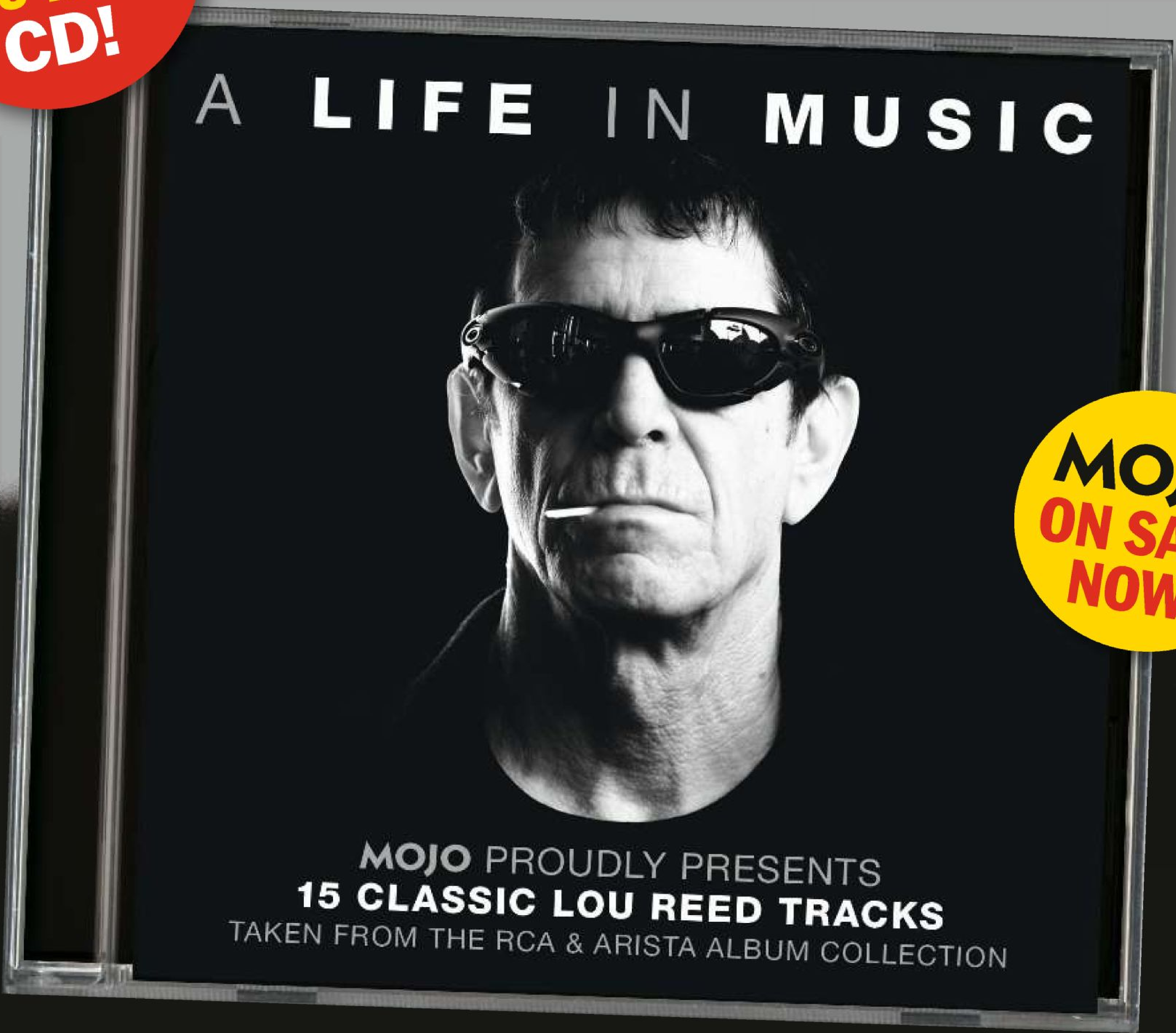
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MOJO ’60s

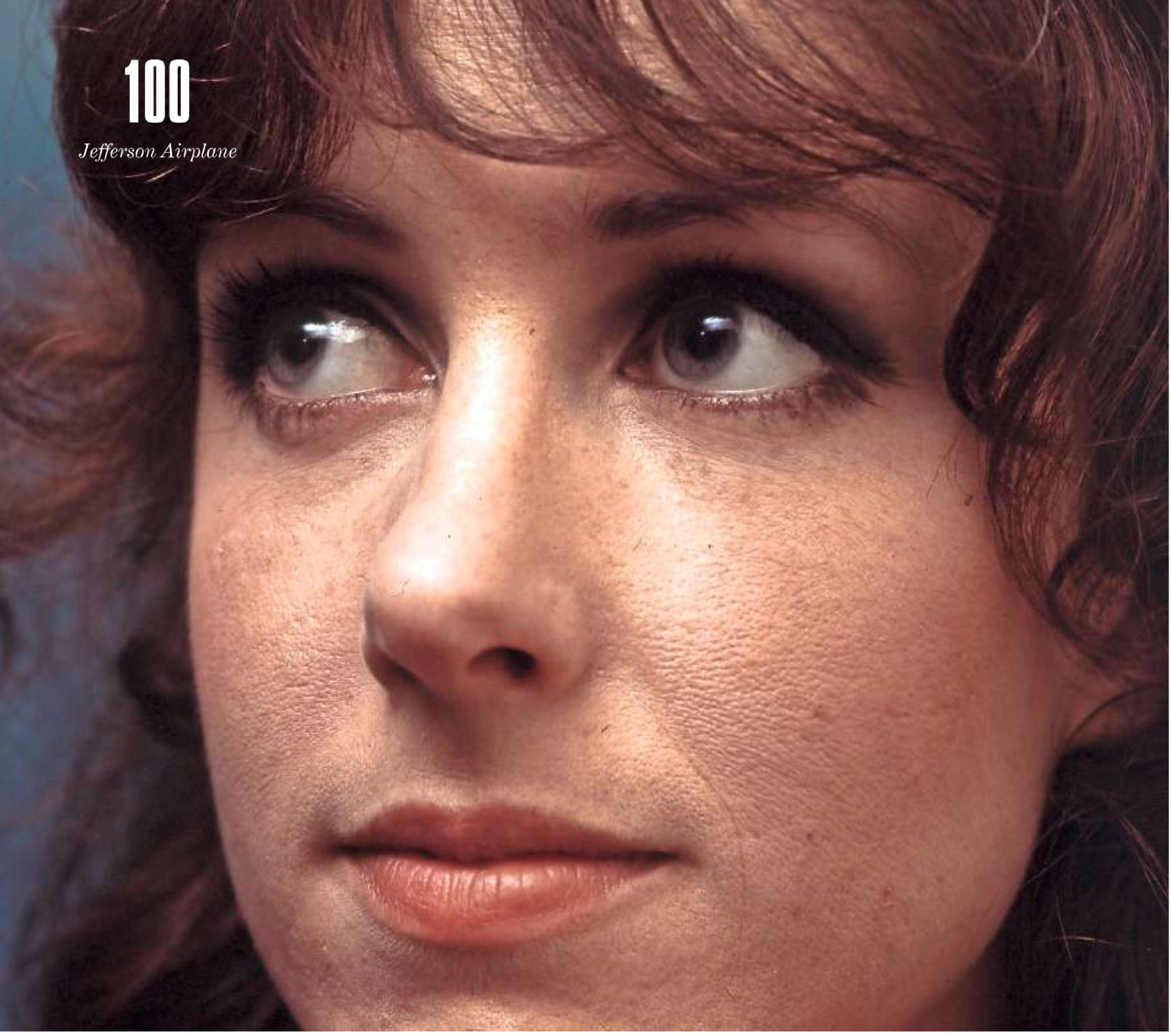
CELEBRATING ROCK’S DECADE OF COOL

Getty

LUCY LEAVE, Double O Bo, Remember Me, Walk With Me Sydney and Butterfly are not songs widely known to the 45 million record buyers who own *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. They’re the first five tracks on *The Early Years* – the gargantuan 27-disc box set due out in November that provides us with the definitive view of Pink Floyd’s embryonic period. That box is previewed on page 98, as part of our revelatory cover story wherein we re-live their astonishing psychedelic adventures and the subsequent fall-out. Elsewhere in this instalment of MOJO ’60s we bring you remarkable stories on everyone from Sandy Denny to The Electric Prunes via Lee Hazlewood (pictured here with Nancy Sinatra) and B.B. King. We hope you enjoy our endeavours, and we invite you to join us in early December when we aim to do it all over again…

Phil

PHIL ALEXANDER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF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MOJO '60s
CELEBRATING ROCK'S DECADE OF COOL

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Alamy, Cathy McGowan photo © John d Green

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OTIS REDDING*'s epochal* Live At The Whisky A Go Go *album has now been expanded to include every performance from his fabled three-night stand in 1966. By* **GEOFF BROWN**.

RESPECT!

The Big Picture

With the 50th anniversary of Otis Redding's death a little over a year away, the commemorations are beginning to arrive. An early and massively welcome release is the 6-CD Concord Music box set *Live At The Whisky A Go Go: The Complete Recordings*, taken from a legendary series of 1966 shows recorded live at the famed Los Angeles rock club on Sunset Strip from Friday, April 8 to Sunday, April 10.

The seven sets have been a much-visited resource over the years – from 1968's original posthumous vinyl LP *In Person Live At The Whisky A Go Go* to 2010's 2-CD set *Live On The Sunset Strip*. That previous Concord box had nothing from the Friday night, but here all 59 songs performed over the three nights burst with Redding's awesomely primal on-stage energy, lapel-grabbing soul singing and gripping ballads, all framed in template-setting Stax arrangements.

So what's new? Well, the Friday night recordings, remixed and remastered from the original analogue 4-track tapes, are the least-known, and it's never less than fascinating to hear a master soul man rearrange his sets, refresh his songs and work his audience to exhaustion.

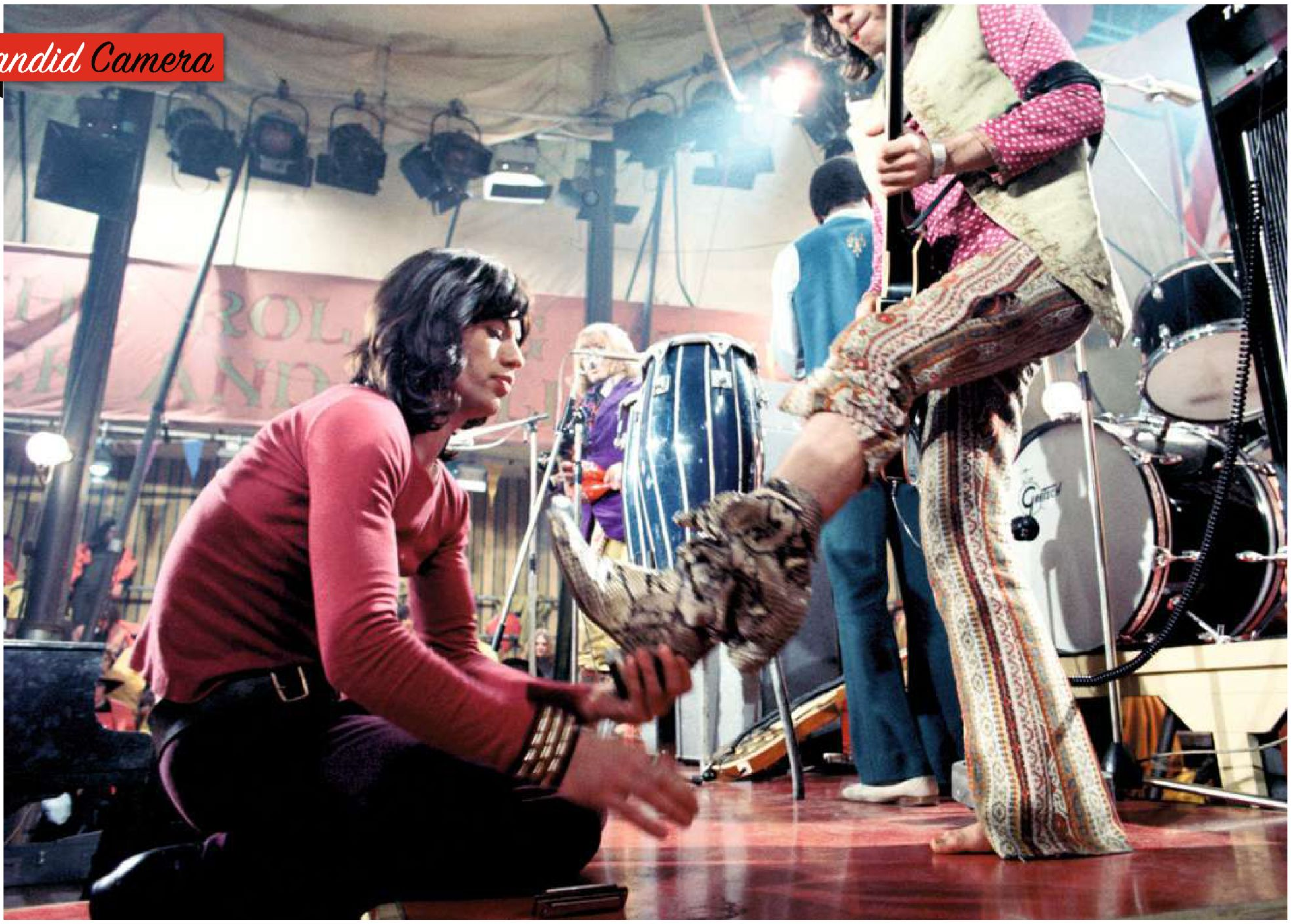
Notoriously, Stax were dissatisfied with the original recordings – one of the trumpets was audibly out of tune – hence its reluctance to release an album while Otis was alive and productive. Now, however, the tapes are precious cargo, making this release essential for any Stax stack.

Getty Images

SHUTTERED!

To mark his 80th birthday, **ROLLING STONES** *bassist and keen photographer* **BILL WYMAN** *is exhibiting his own intimate images of life in the world's greatest rock'n'roll band.* **PAT GILBERT** *gets a preview.*

Candid Camera



© 2016 Bill Wyman Archive (Bill Wyman/Ripple Productions Ltd)

On October 24, Bill Wyman will celebrate his 80th birthday, and to mark the occasion he's opening his photographic archive for a new exhibition titled Around The World In 80 Years, documenting his 31-year tenure with The Rolling Stones, from 1962 to 1993, from his unique perspective within the band.

Wyman first became interested in photography when an uncle gave him his first camera as a schoolboy and soon became enchanted by the lens's power to "capture historical moments to look back on". On tour with the Stones, a camera was never far from his side, and he took intimate images of the group on-stage and off. "I prefer to keep out of the way and capture candid photographs that are un-staged and natural," he says.

Other iconic images include Keith Richards in the band's New York office in June 1981 sporting a black eye given to him by Chuck Berry, the *Emotional Rescue* sessions in Nassau in January 1979, and reportage from '60s European tours and rehearsals for the Rock And Roll Circus film.

Around the World in 80 Years: Photographs by Bill Wyman runs at Proud Chelsea from October 19 to November 27, 2016. More info at www.proud.co.uk

A shot away: (above) Mick takes off Keith's boot, The Rock And Roll Circus, December 11, 1969; (left) Brian Jones en route to the Palazzo Dello Sport Stadium, Milan, April 8, 1967.

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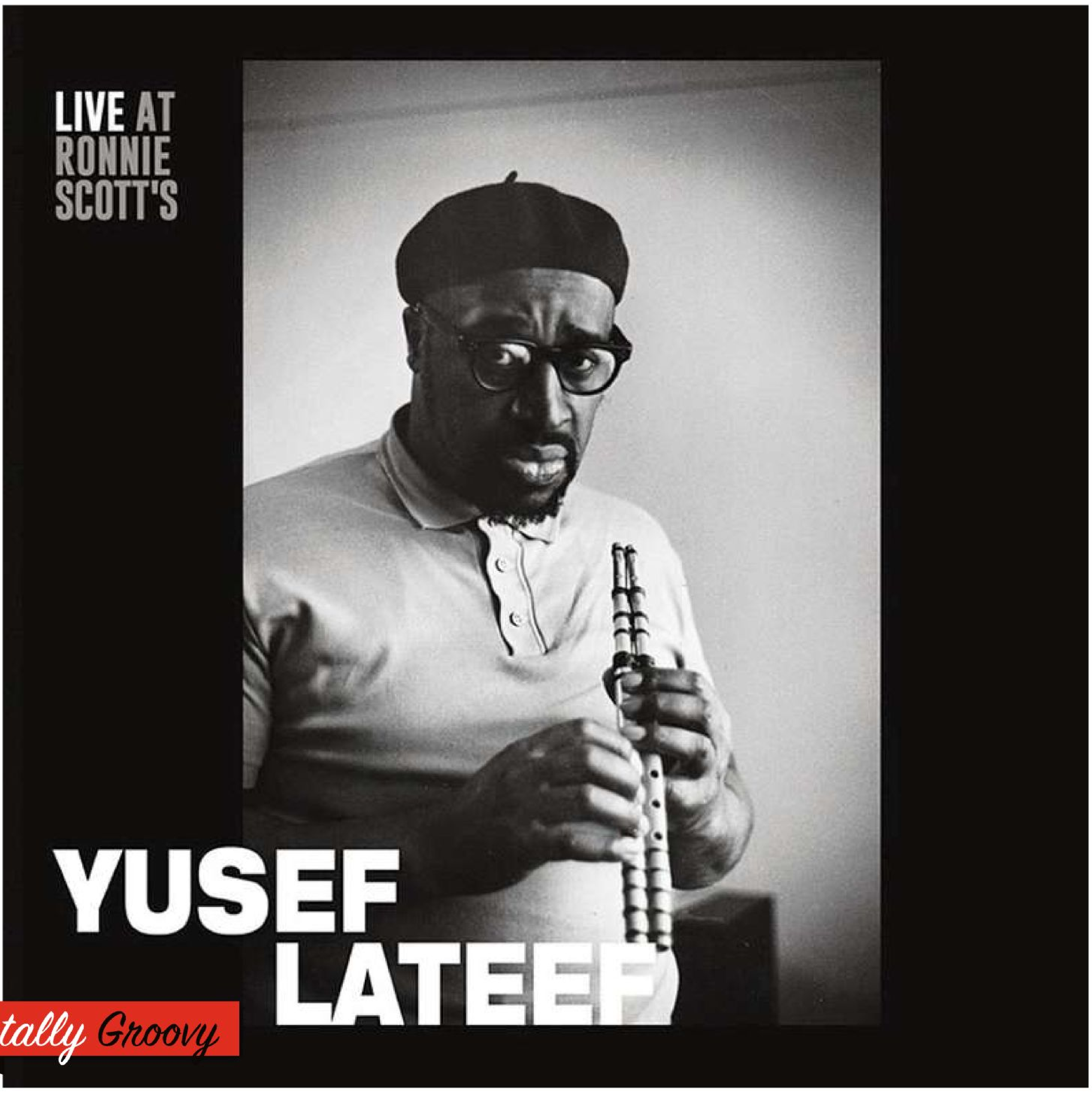
Xun for the money: Lateef and (bottom) The Shaggs.



Totally Groovy

THE VINYL PROGRAMME

Searing new Stones, skinhead and soul rarities and reissues, all on bonnie black plastic!
By **IAN HARRISON**.

THE ROLLING STONES
in mono

Like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel – as Noel Harrison's The Windmills Of Your Mind so deftly put it in '69 – there's nothing like a proper record to send you into ecstatic reveries. And as the thirst for – and supply of – vinyl releases grows, this quarter's haul of '60s reissues is a groover's bonanza.

Out now, **The Rolling Stones In Mono** *(ABKCO/UMC)* is a 16-disc box that starts with their 1964 debut and ends with '69s *Let It Bleed*, bolstered by the American and British versions of *Out Of Our Heads* and *Aftermath*, plus a double LP of rarities, *Stray Cats*, which replicates the 'R.S.V.P. card' *Beggars Banquet* sleeve. As the title suggests, the sounds have been restored to monaural splendour by Bob Ludwig using the original masters: to get the votaries even more flustered, there's a hyper-limited edition that's bundled with nine replica UK and international 45s.

More great single-speaker listening comes via **Ray Charles – The Atlantic Years In Mono** *(Rhino, out now)*, where seven of the man's albums from '57-'61 get "fully remastered from the original mono analogue tapes" with quality facsimile sleeves.

Tim Buckley's **Lady Give Me Your Key: The Unissued 1967 Solo Acoustic Sessions** *(Future Days Recordings, October 21)* collects 13 solo demos cut with Jerry Yester, remastered from original analogue tapes and an acetate belonging to Buckley's collaborator Larry Beckett.

Then there's London's Gearbox imprint, whose **Yusef Lateef – Live At Ronnie Scott's** *(November 4)* captures jazz's further-east multi-instrumentalist playing the Chinese xun flute and the Indian shehnai with accompaniment by Britjazz great Stan Tracey and band on January 15, 1966. Vinyl epicures should note it's been cut with Gearbox's vintage Haeco Scully lathe at their King's Cross facility.

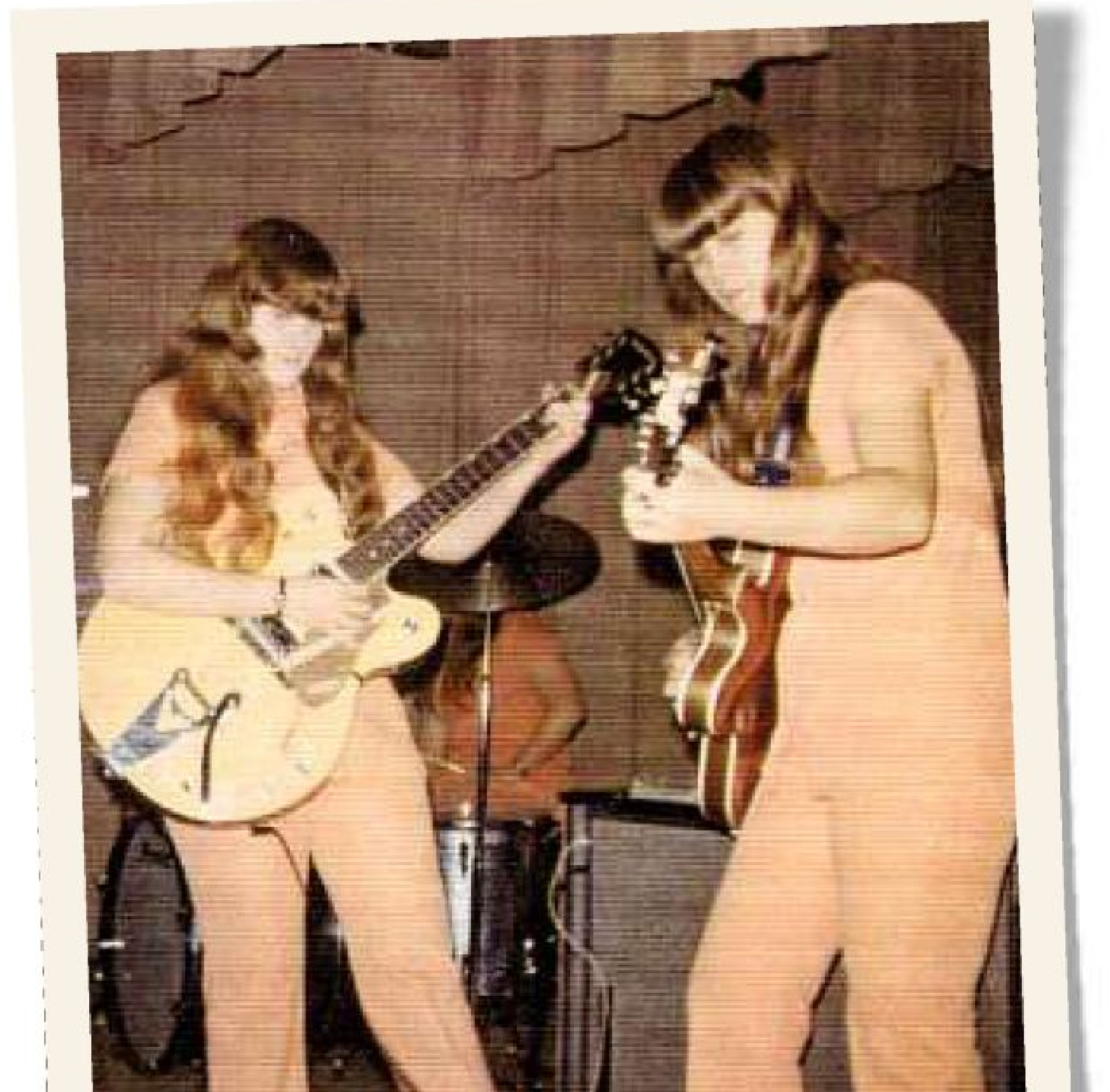
Billy Hawks' **O'Baby! EP** *(BGP, out now)* collects four tracks from the Virginia organ whiz's '68 LP *Heavy Soul!* on 7-inch. Keeping things soulful, double vinyl **This Is Fame 1964-1968** *(Kent, out now)* compiles rare Southern tracks from the celebrated studio's house label, including the searing You Really Know How To Hurt A Guy by Ralph Soul Jackson.

The **Spirit Of '69** box set *(Trojan, November 14)* features eight replica reggae 7-inches for skins, including the rare 1969 Lloyd Charmers 45 Freedom Sound, which would set you back around £200 in its original form. It's annotated by reggae historian Michael de Koningh, who sadly died in June.

Someone wants seven grand for an original copy on Discogs, but now you can get a new edition of The Shaggs' 1968 opus **Philosophy Of The World** from Light In The Attic *(October 28)* for much less than that. The three Wiggins sisters from New Hampshire made convention-free DIY garage pop that was so epically wrong, it couldn't be more right.

Over in Scandinavia, **The Girls Want The Boys! Swedish Beat Girls 1966-1970** *(Ace, October 28)* collects swinging Svenska pop from Abba's Agnetha Fältskog and Anni-Frid Lyngstad, among others. Mona Wessman's Music To Watch Girls By gets a Bergman-esque feeling of gloom when sung in Swedish.

From Morricone's soundtrack for Pasolini's sexodelic 1968 movie **Teorema** *(Friends And Family, out now)*, the disorientating, you've-been-drugged theme L'Ultima Corrida is just the thing for entering the event horizon of new mystery vinyl.



Shaggs pic courtesy of Matthew Thomas

Blonde On Blonde Revisited
THE VINYL EDITION!

Bob Dylan's classic 1966 album covered in full! On double vinyl!

As well as the standard issue of this month's magazine, MOJO's *Blonde On Blonde Revisited* comes in a special deluxe vinyl edition that has been produced to a remarkably high specification.

MOJO
BOB DYLAN
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THE ARTISTS

From Ryley Walker via Jim O'Rourke to Chip Taylor, every participating artist has been hand-picked by MOJO. See Page 6 for full tracklisting.

THE MILTON GLASER 1966 POSTER

A reproduction of the original poster created by celebrated US artist Milton Glaser of Dylan in '66.

THE BOB DYLAN SIGNATURE COVER

The package comes with an exclusive front page which is devoid of cover lines but features Bob Dylan's signature.

Order your copy of this exclusive package from: www.mojo4music.com

He was the trad jazz king who became the "father of British blues" and more besides, founding the Marquee, giving the **STONES** *their first break, meeting the then unknown* **BEATLES** *at the Cavern, and taking jazz and the blues to communist East Germany.* **LOIS WILSON** *hears his stories.*

CHRIS BARBER

Getty

Your role in bringing US blues artists to the UK led to your "father of the British blues" tag. What effect did those musicians have on home-grown music?

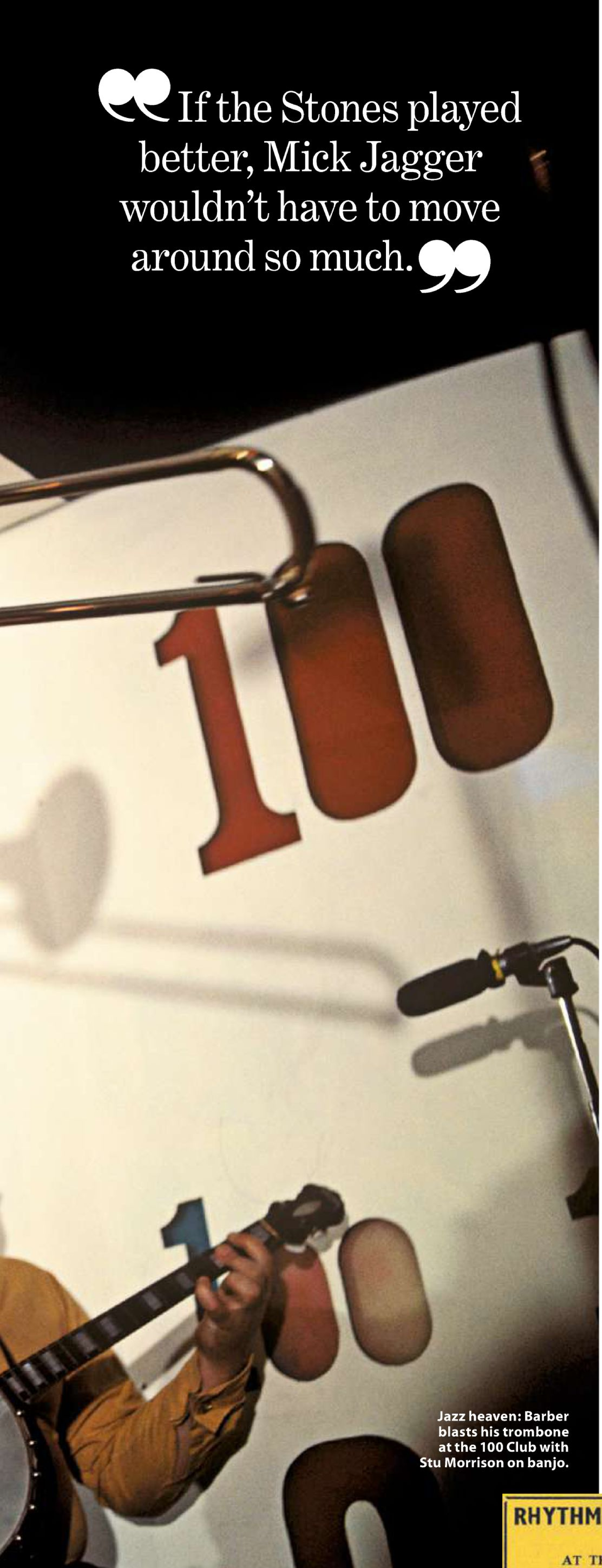
Well, the '60s had really begun in the late '50s. I'd brought Sister Rosetta Tharpe over in 1957, then Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee in 1958, then Muddy Waters and Otis Spann. Then in the '60s, we had Jimmy Cotton, Louis Jordan, Sonny Boy Williamson… Playing behind them really influenced everything I did from then on. I had been playing trad jazz with my band, but we started incorporating more blues and R&B into our sound, and introduced blues sections into our shows led by Alexis Korner. It all culminated in [1964's] *Good Morning Blues*.

How did you encounter fellow blues like enthusiasts Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies?

They first met in my band and went on to form Blues Incorporated in '61 who were a touchstone for the Stones. I actually first played with Alexis in 1949; we were at St Paul's school together but he was two years older than me. We played Big Maceo Merriweather numbers so we had a blues section back in the late '40s, and then when we

What GOES ON!

> “If the Stones played better, Mick Jagger wouldn’t have to move around so much.”



Jazz heaven: Barber blasts his trombone at the 100 Club with Stu Morrison on banjo.

had the Marquee, I got Alexis to play blues on Thursday nights. I remember Jimmy Page turned up with his guitar one time and sang Brownie McGhee.

Didn’t Keith Richards hit your business partner Harold Pendleton for booting them off the stage?

The first time the Stones played the Marquee was in support of Alexis Korner and they got sacked. Alexis or one of his band told Harold to “Get these rubbish people out of here. We won’t accept them as a supporting act!” Harold had to tell the Stones they weren’t wanted and Keith Richards held a grudge towards him after that. He actually hit him one time, swung his guitar at him another time. It wasn’t Harold’s fault, though.

What did you make of The Rolling Stones?

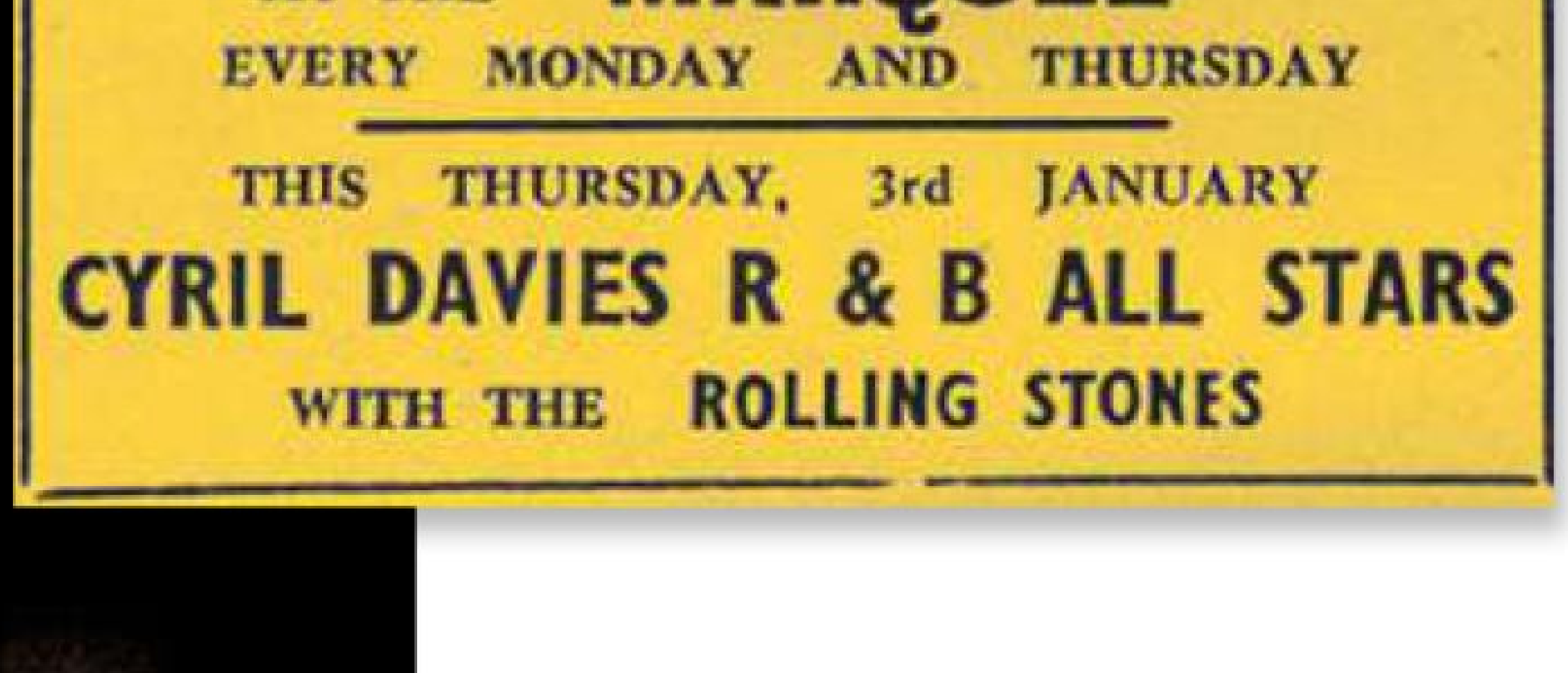
I didn’t object to them like Alexis, but I’d think, If they played better, Mick Jagger wouldn’t have to move around so much. They were fun, but the blues was supposed to be meaningful and I didn’t think theirs was.

You helped set up the Marquee club with Harold Pendleton.

We were playing the 100 Club but while the sound was great out front, on the stage, the acoustics were rotten – you couldn’t hear yourself. So we set up the Marquee. Harold found the location, in the basement of the Academy cinema on Oxford Street, just a few yards down from the 100 Club. At first we had one night a week, then we moved to Wardour Street, put on the Joe Harriott Quintet and modern jazz groups on a Saturday, and my band had the Wednesday or the Thursday night.

When did the R&B nights start?

In ’62, as soon as we found some R&B bands that could play it. Harold and Giorgio Gomelsky, who was working at the club with me, and also managing The Yardbirds, got them in on the opening Friday night. I used to sit in with them on trombone. One time, we hosted a benefit concert. It was just me on trombone and Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck played guitars; another time I sat in with the Jeff Beck Group with Rod Stewart on vocals.



RHYTHM & BLUES EXCITEMENT
AT THE MARQUEE
EVERY MONDAY AND THURSDAY
THIS THURSDAY, 3rd JANUARY
CYRIL DAVIES R & B ALL STARS
WITH THE ROLLING STONES

You went to America to see the blues being played. Was being a blues fan a political act?

There was a political dimension – blues is the people’s music. Its origin is in black America, the right wing in Britain had no empathy, sympathy, understanding. Just by promoting it, playing it, talking about it, you’re breaking down racial barriers. You’ve got to remember that black and white musicians couldn’t actually play on the same stage together in the south of America, it was illegal until the passing of the Civil Rights Bill in 1964. I remember when I first went over to see Muddy Waters in Chicago, he was playing what was basically an off-licence with a few tables and chairs to an audience of about 40 older black people. We did Southbound Train with Muddy’s band. Everyone went crazy.

You also played frequently in communist East Germany. How did audiences there react?

There was a communist government, but there was very little difference between the people who came to see us there and our fans in Britain. No one objected to us playing jazz. Yes, it was American music, but Berlin had had a vibrant jazz scene dating back to the ’20s. Providing we didn’t show off our rich Western ways we got invited back.

You covered Catcall, an obscure Quarrymen/Beatles song in 1967. How did you come across the track?

Whenever we played Liverpool in the early ’60s, after the show we’d go to the Cavern. They’d have a jazz main band and then the interval slot would be taken by a local group, often The Beatles. One time, John [Lennon] asked our clarinet player Ian Wheeler if he’d manage them. Paul [McCartney] had written an instrumental called Catswalk, it was very jazzy, and years later Paul asked if we’d record it. We called it Catcall. Paul and his girlfriend Jane Asher were there and joined in on the catcalls in the chorus. Giorgio Gomelsky put it out as a single on Marmalade [in October], but Polydor wouldn’t put the money up to give it promotion and it disappeared. That whole period was such a creative time, a lot of stuff got lost in the crazy melee.

Where Were You When...

BOWIE PLAYED HIS FREE FESTIVAL

In summer 1969, struggling musician/performer **DAVID BOWIE** *co-founded the grandly named* **BECKENHAM ARTS LAB** *upstairs in a pub, publicising it with a free festival in the local park. Singer* **BRIDGET ST JOHN** *recalls sharing the bill with the future Ziggy Stardust and hearing Space Oddity for the first time.*

DATE:
August 16, 1969
EYEWITNESS:
Singer-songwriter
Bridget St John

David Bowie and his then flatmate Mary Finnigan set up the Beckenham Arts Lab 'Growth' in 1969. It was held every Sunday evening at the Three Tuns pub on Beckenham High Street. I was just 22 when it started up. I'd done a few gigs at university the year before, played some shows with John Peel and opened up for Jethro Tull at Nottingham's Boathouse, but I was still very much finding my way in the music world. I think David Bowie had found out about me through the John Peel connection and booked me to play. I ended up playing there twice and I remember being really honoured to have been asked by him. It was a good feeling.

My main worry was how I was going to get there. I lived in north London, didn't drive, so I was dictated to by train timetables. I had to get the underground, a train, then walk to the pub and then catch the last train back, all with my guitar. I remember walking in and being surprised at just how low-key and comfortable it was. David Bowie was just sat there with his long curly hair playing the acoustic guitar and when it was my turn to play he introduced me to the audience. I was very shy, this was still a new world of experience for me. I know people like Tony Visconti, Peter Frampton, Mick Ronson, etc, were all frequenters of the club, but I didn't talk to any of them.

After my shows at the Arts Lab, David invited me to play his free festival on August 16 at Beckenham's Croydon Road recreation ground. It was to raise money to fund a permanent home for the club. I was very excited, mainly because it was held outside and different to anything I'd done before. The line-up included The Strawbs, Comus, Peter Horton, Appendix Part 1. There were around 3,000 people there and in the middle of the little green was a beautiful pagoda-like bandstand, where we all sat and played. Then surrounding it were stalls selling jewellery and ceramics, tarot readings, astrologers, the Tibetan shop. Angie [Barnett], Bowie's girlfriend, was making hamburgers in a wheelbarrow, the Brian Moore Puppet Theatre performed and lots of kids were running around. It was a really beautiful day, and I spent as much time wandering around soaking up the atmosphere as watching the music.

I remember Keith Christmas, as we'd done a few gigs together before, and he was a total extrovert; he stood up to play and introduced a totally different dynamic with Robin Head.

Bowie sat playing acoustic guitar and performed Wide-Eyed Boy From The Cloud, Janine and An Occasional Dream, if I remember correctly. Three years later [on March 4, 1972] I opened for David Bowie at the South Parade Pier in Southsea, Portsmouth, the night of a hurricane which overturned the Isle Of Wight hovercraft. This was when he was touring Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars. He was wearing platform heels, and it was the first time I'd heard Mick Ronson play guitar. It was far removed from his performances at the Arts Lab and the festival, where he was sitting down playing his songs.

My most vivid memory of the Beckenham free festival is that several of us ended up in a living room in a house off the green. I'm not sure if it was where David Bowie was living at the time or if it was one of his friends' places, but he played a group of us the acetate of Space Oddity on a tiny Dansette record player. We played it over and over. It really blew everyone away, it was so different, full, absolutely wonderful.

He was so proud of it and I'll never forget hearing it; as a songwriter I was totally smitten. It really opened my world up to the possibilities of what you could write about. Bowie showed me there were and are endless possibilities.

As told to Lois Wilson

Rex, Retna/Photoshot

> “Bowie played us an acetate of Space Oddity on a tiny Dansette record player and it blew everyone away.”

Keep off the grass: Bowie performs on the bandstand at Croydon Road recreation ground, Beckenham.

Twin peaks: Barry Ryan rocks the biker look in '66; and (bottom left), the teenage, pre-Damned Dave Vanian.

My Sounds Of The '60s

DAVE VANIAN

B-movie monsters that eat surfers, songs about witches, manic-depressive orchestral rock, gems discovered on tour in US mark-down stores, – all in a long, dark night of mind-blowing underground garage heaven for **THE DAMNED**'*s '60s-minded singer.*

Alamy

GENESIS
RALPH NIELSEN AND THE CHANCELLORS
BARRY RYAN
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE
THE BALLOON FARM
STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK
AMBOY DUKES
LEFT BANKE
13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS
THE LOLLIPOP SHOPPE

1 GENESIS

The Girl Who Never Was

(On In The Beginning*, Mercury, 1968)*

"If this track was a '60s movie, it would open with the camera panning across a field of flowers and there would be a girl in a mini-skirt swinging her handbag. The group were a five-piece and only made one record before disbanding. [Late '60s vocalist] Sue Richman sings on this track, so it sounds a bit like Jefferson Airplane, with a great flute solo. The frontman Jack Ttanna had previously been in The Sons Of Adam, and their guitarist Kent Henry went on to play in Steppenwolf."

2 RALPH NIELSEN AND THE CHANCELLORS

Scream

(Single, Surf Records, 1962)

"We used to cover this song in The Phantom Chords. It was perfect for us – it's got this really driving beat, this rock'n'roll guy going, 'Come on! Come On!', and then they've got a girl screaming all the way through it. We did it straight and we used to invite a girl up from the audience every night, her sole job was to do the screaming. I think it was originally written to be used in one of those bad B-movies, it was about this monster that eats surfers; but the song was deemed so bad they never used it."

3 BARRY RYAN

The Hunt

(Single, Polydor, 1969)

"I love the big balladeers like The Walker Brothers, and I love Paul and Barry Ryan. The Hunt is very grandiose, strange, and the orchestration is really powerful. Paul would write the songs, and the fact he was a manic depressive was reflected in the edginess of the music. When The Damned did [Barry Ryan's] Eloise I got to meet him a few times; Paul got excited and he started to write again. He wrote a song about John Lennon, but then passed away [in 1992]."

4 JEFFERSON AIRPLANE

White Rabbit

(On Surrealistic Pillow*, RCA Victor, 1967)*

"I've got to include it because The Damned covered it, and how much more psychedelic can you get than this song about Alice In Wonderland? The book is psychedelic enough, and this goes even further. I love Grace Slick's voice, there is something very menacing about it. Even when she sings the sweet stuff she's a bit scary. And there's that counter-balance of love and hate with the Airplane. Her version with The Great Society of Sally Go Round The Roses is another great song."

5 THE BALLOON FARM

A Question Of Temperature

(Single, Laurie, 1967)

"This is another one of those hard-edged, driving garage rock songs, and it is just great that someone could write a chorus with the word 'temperature' in it. The Balloon Farm were from New Jersey, only managed two singles, this one and then Hurry Up Sundown, which flopped. There was a period in The Damned with Paul Gray and Roman Jugg when we listened to nothing but this kind of stuff."

6 THE STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK

Incense & Peppermints

(Single, Uni, 1967)

"I heard a lot of this stuff at midnight matinees. I was 12, 13, and they'd show Psych-Out, The Wild Angels, The Trip, Russ Meyer films, and the Strawberry Alarm Clock, Chocolate Watchband, Seeds, Shadows Of Knight would appear in them. That's where I probably first heard Incense And Peppermints in Psych-Out; they also perform it in Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls, and it just sums up the whole '60s counter culture perfectly. Astonishingly it got to Number 1 in the US.

7 AMBOY DUKES

Journey To The Center Of The Mind

(On Journey To The Center Of The Mind*, Mainstream Records, 1968)*

"I probably came across this when we were on tour in the US. We'd go through the mark-down racks and boxes in record shops and pick up a lot of records just for their cover artwork. They'd be 50 cents at a time so you could take a chance. Amboy Dukes were Ted Nugent's band, they were based in Detroit, and have that city's working-class hard edge and drive. This has got the greatest song title, and has all the right ingredients of garage and psychedelia: searing guitar, pounding drums, immediacy."

8 LEFT BANKE

Shadows Breaking Over My Head

(On Walk Away Renee/ Pretty Ballerina*, Smash, '67)*

"Shadows Breaking Over My Head? That could be a Damned title and we did consider covering this at one time, but thought better of it. Their songs were beautiful, strange, intense. The orchestration is brilliant; they called it baroque pop and had these beautiful string arrangements and vocal harmonies. It's on their first album *Walk Away Renee/Pretty Ballerina*; both of the title tracks are brilliant too. They, like many of these bands, made records so quickly, just recorded them and pushed them out. They got one of their dads, [jazz violinist] Harry Lookofsky, to produce them."

9 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS

You're Gonna Miss Me

(On The Psychedelic Sounds Of*, International Artists, '66)*

"This is another well known song which has to be in my list. I love the strident beat and Tommy Hall doing the mike-amplified electric jug on it. I've never seen Roky Erickson live, though [in 2002] I did get to play with Arthur Lee and The Electric Prunes. They were both phenomenal, like no time had passed."

10 THE LOLLIPOP SHOPPE

You Must Be A Witch

(Single, Uni, 1968)

"I heard this on *Pebbles* [Volume 8], although it's also on their 1968 *Just Color* album. Donovan had done Season Of The Witch so The Lollipop Shoppe did You Must Be A Witch, and I always like a good witch tune. Again, it's tough, urgent, and written by Fred Cole, the group's singer, guitarist and main songwriter. Two of their songs, Mr Madison Avenue and Who's It Gonna Be, appeared on the 1968 Angels From Hell soundtrack. But I could have picked so many others for this…

> "I heard a lot of this stuff at midnight matinees. I was 12, 13."

DOWNTOWN
PETULA CLARK
THANK YOU
BABY IT'S ME
TRUE LOVE

The Story Behind The Song

DOWNTOWN

LABEL Pye **RELEASED** November 1964 **CHART PEAK** UK 2/US 1
COMPOSER/ PRODUCER Tony Hatch **RECORDED** Pye Studios

In 1964, **PETULA CLARK** *hadn't had a UK hit for over a year, concentrating instead on cutting foreign-language records. Then her producer wrote* **DOWNTOWN** *after a trip to New York and suddenly everything changed.*

"In 1964, I was living in an apartment in Paris. I had been having hits in France with songs sung in French, but I'd not had a UK hit since Chariot in early 1963. Tony Hatch (pictured bottom right), the songwriter and producer, had been working with The Searchers, but also supervising my recordings at London's Pye Studios. He would book the session, the studio and the orchestra.

Tony had taken a trip to New York and came to Paris to talk about my next French session, but he also mentioned how I should really sing in English again. I said, 'Yes, but it has to be the right song.' He played me three or four which he'd got from publishers in New York to see if I liked them and wanted to record them. I didn't, and I asked him if he had anything else.

He'd been inspired by his trip to New York, his first time there, and he had the beginnings of a song, no words, just the title Downtown. So he sat at my piano and while I went into the kitchen and put the kettle on for a tea break I heard the intro and I just said, 'That is one fantastic tune, I love it, write some lyrics, get the arrangements, and let's do it.' Two weeks later, on October 16, I went into Studio One of Pye Recording Studios to record it.

In those days we tracked live, so I walked into the studio and there were 30 to 40 musicians already amassed, including eight violinists, two viola players, two cellists, four trumpeters, four trombonists, a flautist, oboe player, bassist and pianist.

Jimmy Page was there too and as soon as I heard the orchestra strike up the introduction, I couldn't wait to get to the mike.

I'd heard Tony play the song all the way through on the piano just once before the session. That's the way it used to be, there was no time for rehearsals or to prepare. So after a run-through for the musicians, Tony went into the booth and his assistant Bob Leaper took over on the floor and I just stood at the mike and sang. It was a spontaneous vocal performance, and I had this instant connection with the song.

There is something about doing a song for the first time. There is only ever going to be one first time, and I've been in a studio where I've had a producer say, 'Let's try it this way, then that way,' and I've had to do a song again and again, and you lose that initial reaction to it.

It helped that Ray Prickett was the engineer, he was amazing, he had been in the studio with me before, so he knew my voice. I was both comfortable with him but exhilarated because of the song. It took three takes to get down, it was quick, and we went with the second one.

On release it hit Number 2 in December 1964 and stayed there for three weeks and was only kept off Number 1 by The Beatles' I Feel Fine. It also became a London anthem. London in the '60s was a very exciting place. I wasn't taking part in the sex, drugs and rock'n'roll scene, but it was in the air. It also became a huge hit in the US, too, giving me my first Number 1 there and the first of 15 consecutive US Top 40 hits.

Joe Smith, the A&R man at Warners, was responsible for that. He came over to London, he heard the record and said, 'I want that', and that was it, it was an immediate hit. I didn't do any promotion, and a lot of the Americans hearing it didn't know I was English, they thought I was American and black.

When it hit Number 1 out there in January 1965, I was on a tour of French speaking Canada, Montreal, Quebec… I started getting calls from the Ed Sullivan show, which was *the* show, and Ed was saying, 'You've got to get here', but I had a tour of France to do after Canada. Eventually I did

Alamy (2)

Pet sounds: "I'd heard the song only once all the way through when I recorded the vocal," says Clark; (opposite bottom right) Tony Hatch makes a call.

> It became a London anthem. I wasn't taking part in the sex, drugs and rock'n'roll scene, but it was in the air.

get there – after playing a show on the Saturday night in Paris, I flew to New York to do the Ed Sullivan show live on the Sunday. I got into New York totally wrecked, and got to the studio for dress rehearsal in front of the audience with no make-up on just as they were playing the introduction to the song.

They were playing it too fast but I walked onto the stage and the place went crazy, there was mutual excitement, me singing it for the first time in New York to an American audience and them hearing it live for the first time.

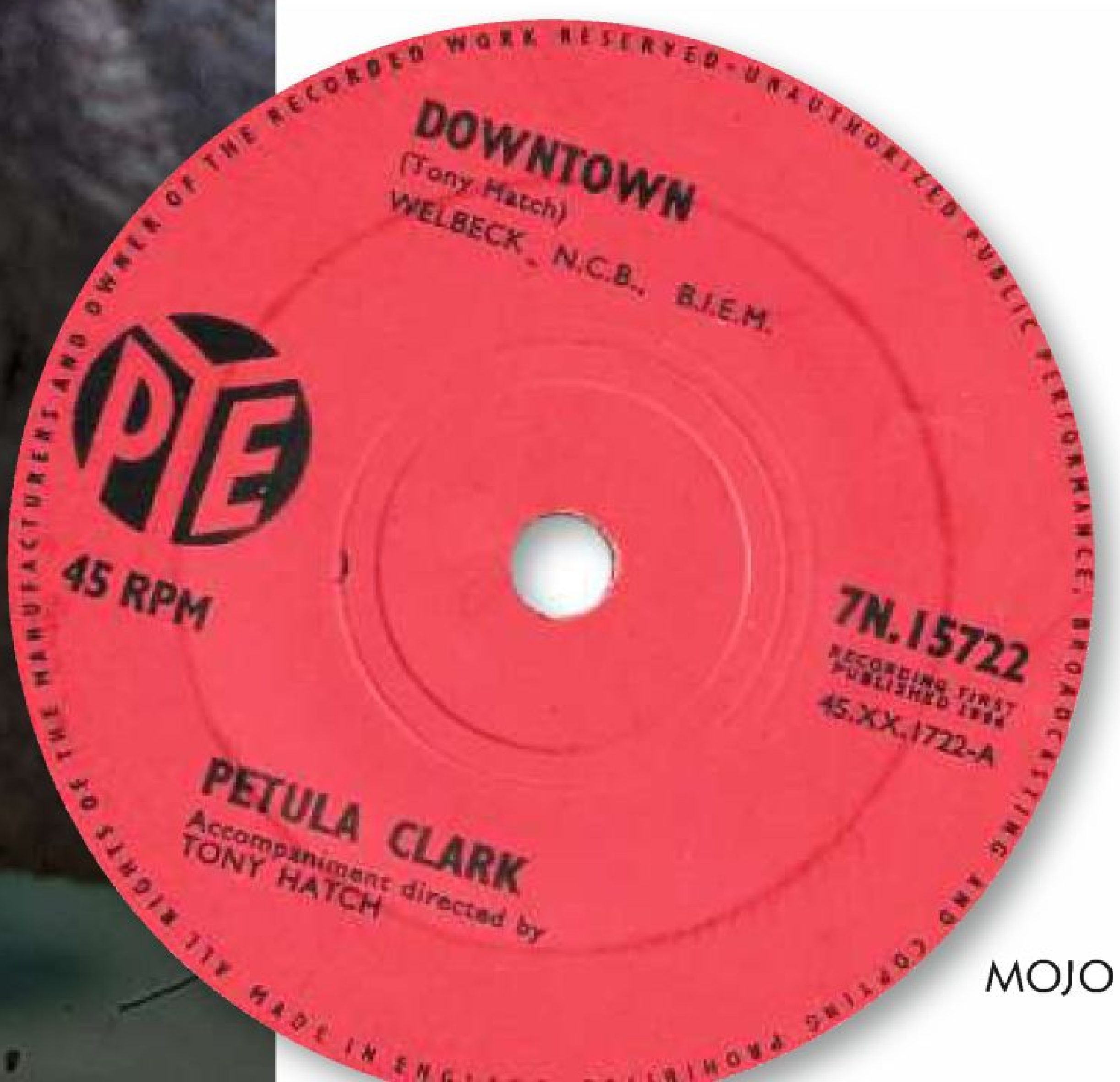
I'd been having hits since 1954, but Downtown really was different. The song swept me along with it, and I did non-English versions for different countries – I sang an Italian, German and French version. It had its own sound, from the songwriting itself, how the song had three different movements, how the orchestra built throughout. With my voice, it was a unique combination.

The song has become a standard and I've heard many covers. Some I really like, like Dolly Parton's, others not so much, like Sinatra's version, which he didn't like either. The thing is, the song doesn't swing, the way it's built, you can't fool around with it too much.

It's definitely *my* song, though. I was the first to sing it, and wherever I go, anywhere in the world, the audience want to hear it. If I'd been stuck with Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini I'd not be so happy, but with Downtown the joy it gives to an audience is palpable and I still feel the same exhilaration when I'm singing it now as I felt when I first sang it."

As told to Lois Wilson

Petula Clark's new album, From Now On, is out on BMG. She tours the UK in October; more info at www.petulaclark.co.uk


DOWNTOWN
(Tony Hatch)
WELBECK N.C.B. B.I.E.M.
PYE
45 RPM
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RECORDING FIRST PUBLISHED 1964
45.XX.1722-A
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Accompaniment directed by TONY HATCH
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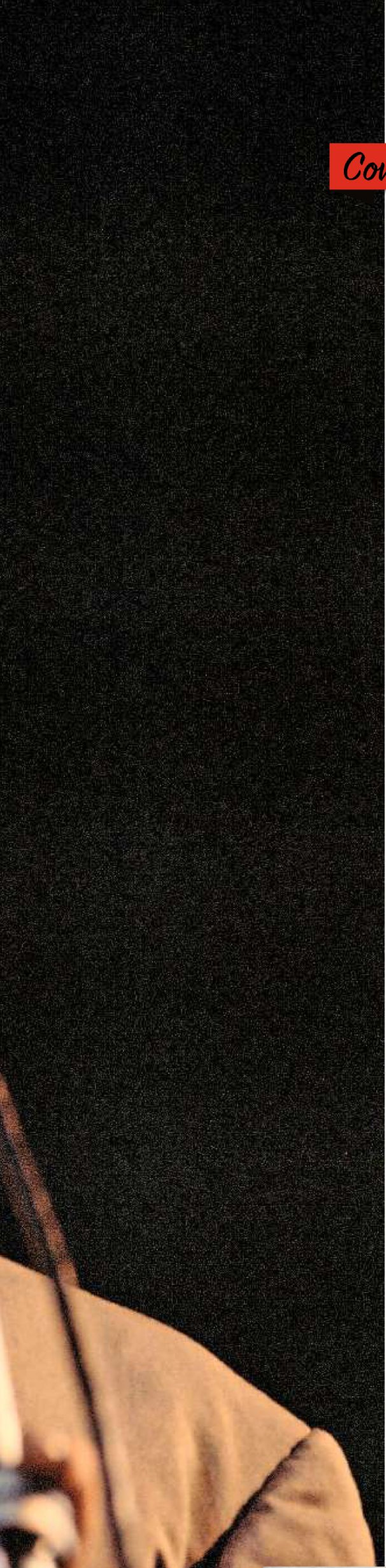
MADE IN ENGLAND

> To realise that I have been singing about this place every night since I was 16 years of age… Everything suddenly fell into place.

God, I know, I'm one: Eric Burdon belts out the blues, 1964.



Sun house: the former Le Soleil Levant, New Orleans.

Covers Uncovered

THE HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

COMPOSER
Traditional
COVERED BY
The Animals, June 1964

When raunchy Newcastle R&B combo **THE ANIMALS** *reworked a track from Bob Dylan's debut album, they brought the world a tale with misty origins stretching back through Appalachian settlers to old British folk ballads. Singer* **ERIC BURDON** *tells* **PAUL TRYNKA** *of his mystical connection to the song that brought him both fame and trouble.*

It's a story that goes back to wherever you want it to – to the streets of a teenager's Newcastle, to Scottish folk tales, the Appalachians, or New Orleans, the city that boasted the most talked-about whorehouses of the New World. For the man who made it famous across the globe, the voyage to find The House Of The Rising Sun is one that defined his life. "For me," says singer Eric Burdon, "it's something that is beyond just my [existence]."

The origins of the song that became a worldwide hit in 1964 are complex, for it is the richest of musical gumbos. Its form reaches back to age-old English and Scottish folk ballads, with a version becoming established in the early years of the 20th century in the lumber and mining communities of the Appalachians, a region long settled by 'Scotch-Irish'. It was first recorded in 1933 by Clarence "Tom" Ashley and Gwen Foster, who worked in what today we'd call the Appalachian 'old time' style.

The theme of the boy-gone-wrong, and the New Orleans setting, is clearly established on that version – although the distinctive chord change to the dominant (the bit that accompanies the "God, I know, I'm one" denouement) is the only real portent of the familiar structure. Georgia Turner's version, recorded by Alan Lomax in 1937, is a cappella, its implied chords more minor, darker, while a 1947 recording by Josh White shows the beginnings of the distinctive chord sequence. Still, the jigsaw is incomplete.

It was either fate, or else the cyclic nature of life and art, that meant by the mid-'50s a young Geordie boy had established a psychic link with the boy-gone-bad ballad. "I was a kid, running away from school," says Eric Burdon, "and I was spending my time in two clubs, both located near the River Tyne. One of them was called the New Orleans club. And in those few little cobble streets I convinced myself that was New Orleans."

Burdon reckons he heard versions of The House Of The Rising Sun around local folk joints from as far back as he can remember, but there's no doubt of the most immediate source: Bob Dylan's 1962 debut album. His version, heavily influenced by Dave Van Ronk, boasted a re-worked, spellbinding chord sequence that Burdon and his band would soon supercharge.

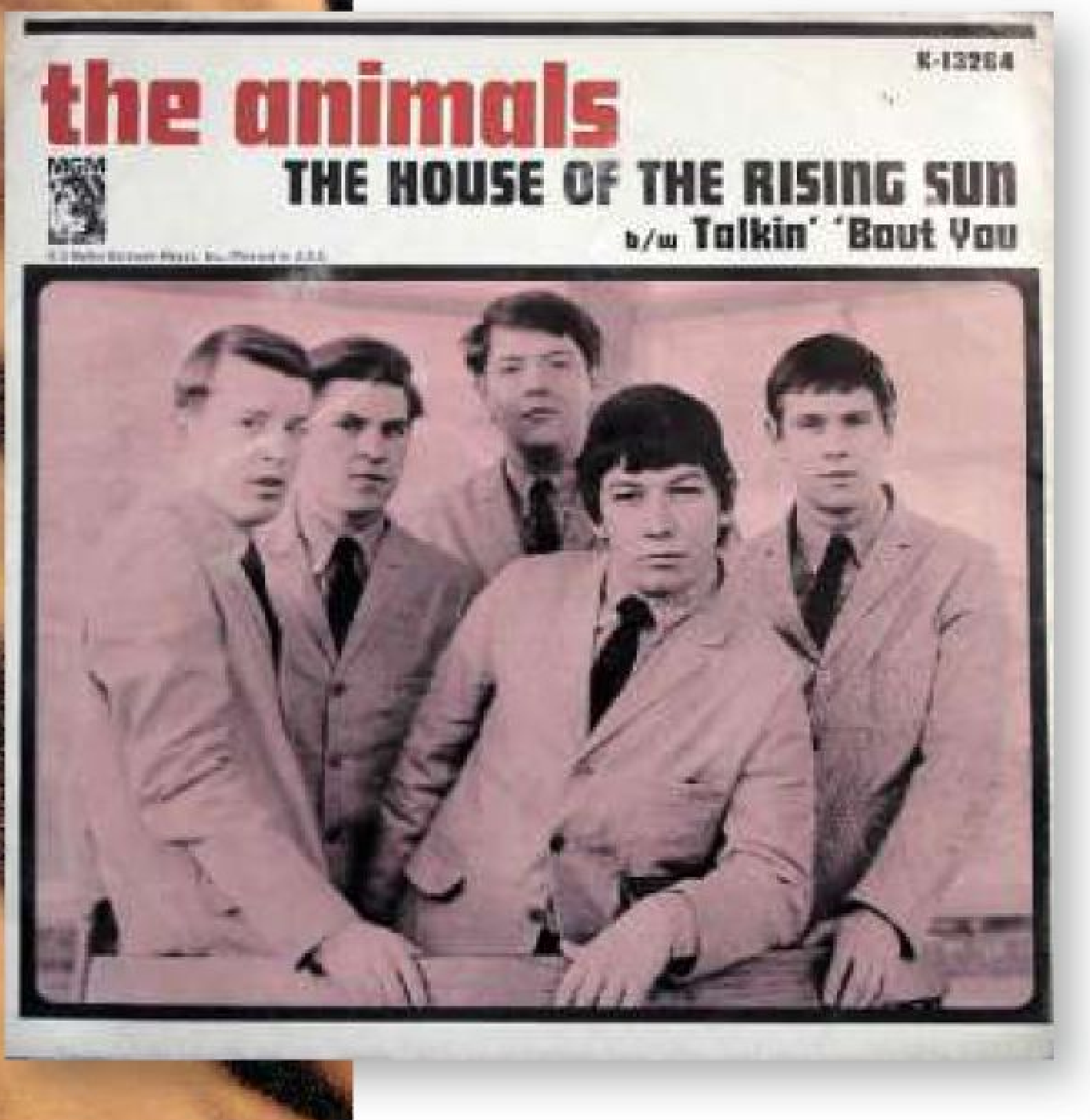
Every Animal's version of how the band arranged their international breakthrough hit differs in essential details, except for one: they came up with it quickly.

Guitarist Hilton Valentine crafted the distinctive opening arpeggios; Alan Price's Vox Continental organ drives the song along; while Burdon's singing is not only raw and impassioned, but governs the dynamics, drawing the listener in. But that perfect arrangement would famously bring bitterness and pain, once the whole band realised the significance of the sole credit ascribed to Alan Price on the label.

"We believed the story that there was not enough room on the record to put all the names on as arrangers, and we went along with it," says Burdon. "We all went for it, because we all believed that we were a group."

The song would help establish the British invasion, and become a key influence on folk rock, and Dylan's electric phase. But even credit disputes cannot destroy the magic of that mythical New Orleans bordello.

Seeking its location, Burdon visited a house in New Orleans once known as Le Soleil Levant, and felt his life had come full circle. "To realise that I have been singing about this place every night since I was 16 years of age… Everything suddenly fell into place. [It] fits the dreamscape that I had in my head – and that's something that's beyond any of us."



COLUMBIA
Bob Dylan

Rex

Young man blues: The Blues Project '68 (from left) Steve Katz, Andy Kulberg, Al Kooper, Danny Kalb.

Nuggets Unearthed

THE BLUES PROJECT

When a bunch of New York musos dubbed 'the Jewish Beatles' went psychedelic, glory seemed assured. Or did it? **MARK PAYTRESS** *hears the sorry tale of* **NO TIME LIKE THE RIGHT TIME**.

SONG No Time Like The Right Time **LABEL** Verve Folkways **RELEASED** 1967
CHART PEAK US 96 **COMPOSER** Al Kooper **PRODUCERS** Tom Wilson & Jerry Schoenbaum

With its complex structure and unexpected chord changes, No Time Like The Right Time was a bit more challenging than your average garage-rock raver. Released as a single in February 1967, it scraped into the Billboard Hot 100 for two weeks, and secured the group a coveted spot at the Monterey Pop festival in June. Then it was virtually all over for The Blues Project.

No Time Like The Right Time had it all – a tense, nervous bassline, hormonal, whisper-to-a-yell vocals and even hints of mysticism during its instrumental break. Trouble was the group themselves didn't like it much.

"It's the worst song!" says guitarist and vocalist Danny Kalb, who had appeared on Elektra's *The Blues Project* compilation in 1964, and liked the title so much he pinched it for his new group.

"Why don't you listen to the *Live At The Matrix* set that's recently come out? *That's* The Blues Project. That other record? Who cares. I never liked it."

Hit records were of little importance to The Blues Project. Emerging from the Greenwich Village folk scene, Kalb, keyboard man Al Kooper, Steve Katz on second guitar; bassist Andy Kulberg and drummer Roy Blumenfeld – were virtuosos high on loud amplification and myriad influences, from blues and jazz to classical.

"We were great musicians," Kalb continues. "They used to call us 'the Jewish Beatles'. Then things deteriorated."

The Blues Project made their way from New York to San Francisco. "We got huge crowds at the Fillmore," says Kalb, whose upper-register playing was soon taken up by local acts Country Joe & The Fish and Big Brother & The Holding Co.

"They all admired us. But the critic out there, Ralph J. Gleason, wanted to push the San Francisco bands, so he did a hit job on us. It was disgusting what that motherfucker did."

So how did No Time Like The Right Time, such an unrepresentative recording, become their legacy?

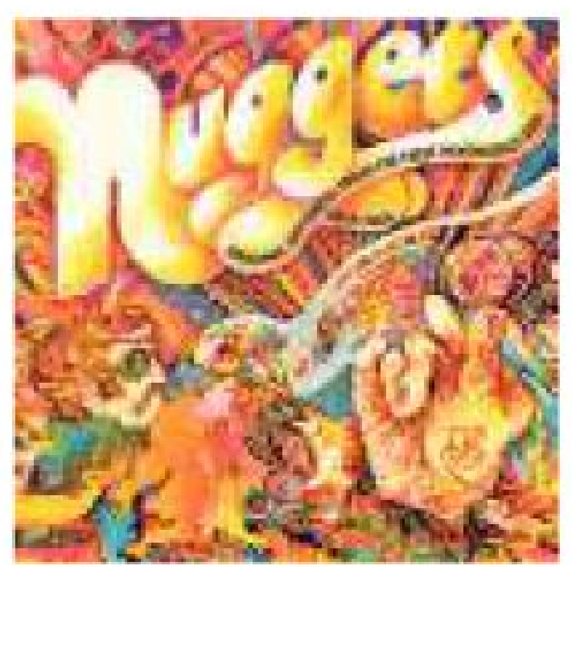
"We were breaking up, though I didn't quite know about it," Kalb laughs. "Al and Steve were thinking about starting another band, and Al wanted to give us a hit record before we said goodbye."

Kooper had worked at the New York hit factory at 1650 Broadway, and according to Kalb, "went back to his roots in the commercial music business," recruiting The Tokens to flesh out his lead vocals on the single.

Having provided The Blues Project with their only hit, he quit in April '67, before resurfacing with Steve Katz several months later in Blood, Sweat & Tears.

Kalb's world collapsed after the rest of the band limped on for their performance at Monterey. "I was absolutely depressed because the band was breaking up, and I got involved with an old girlfriend who was living with one of the big LSD makers," he says. "That was the end of me for 30 years! But a couple of decades ago I came back and today I'm feeling wonderful and playing the best stuff of my life."

Verve FOLKWAYS
KF5040
NO TIME LIKE THE RIGHT TIME
(Kooper)
THE BLUES PROJECT



24-carat gold: the original '72 *Nuggets* compilation. The Blues Project was track seven.

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MARIANNE FAITHFULL

By 1967, the singer had released five albums and been honoured in two famous songs, The Beatles'And Your Bird Can Sing and The Hollies' Carrie Ann.

GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS

In the mid-'60s, **JOHN D GREEN***'s photographed Britain's glamorous new wave of female pop stars, artists, fashion models and debutantes for his cheekily titled book,* **BIRDS OF BRITAIN** *– now the subject of a London exhibition and long-overdue reprint.*

"Girls had found freedom and were determined to enjoy themselves," says photographer John d Green of the women who posed for his 1967 book, Birds Of Britain. "They were being taken seriously and their talents were being recognised. They had confidence and liked the idea of publicity, as it was quite new then. They all wanted to be in the book."

Green, a keen amateur racing driver, served his photographic apprenticeship at the Central Art Studios in Soho's Kingly Street. He became a key face on the Swinging '60s scene, shooting ad campaigns for car and cigarette manufacturers as well as running the Sloop John D, a floating nightclub moored near Chelsea Bridge.

"It was a fantastic time. We all worked very hard, and after a hard day in the studio would go out," he recalls. "There was no such thing as an early night. My favourite clubs were the Ad Lib, owned and run by a dear friend of mine, Paula Noble – a typical '60s girl, full of confidence, very beautiful and very successful. My studio was, and still is, in Adam & Eve Mews in Kensington High Street. The mews was full of amateur racing drivers, like myself, and professional ones too, including James Hunt and Robert Lamplough. There were always parties going on."

Green's most memorable shoot for the book was for Julie Christie, who was filming Far From The Madding Crowd with Terence Stamp in Weymouth. "My car at the time was an E-type Jaguar, which was two-seater drophead. I had a trombone strapped to the luggage rack on the back, and the three of us – Julie Christie, David Tree [the art director]and myself – were shoehorned into the front of the car. We created quite a stir as we drove through Weymouth. The idea was a sunset shoot on the beach, but unfortunately the English weather prevailed and we went back to Julie's hotel and shot most of the pictures there."

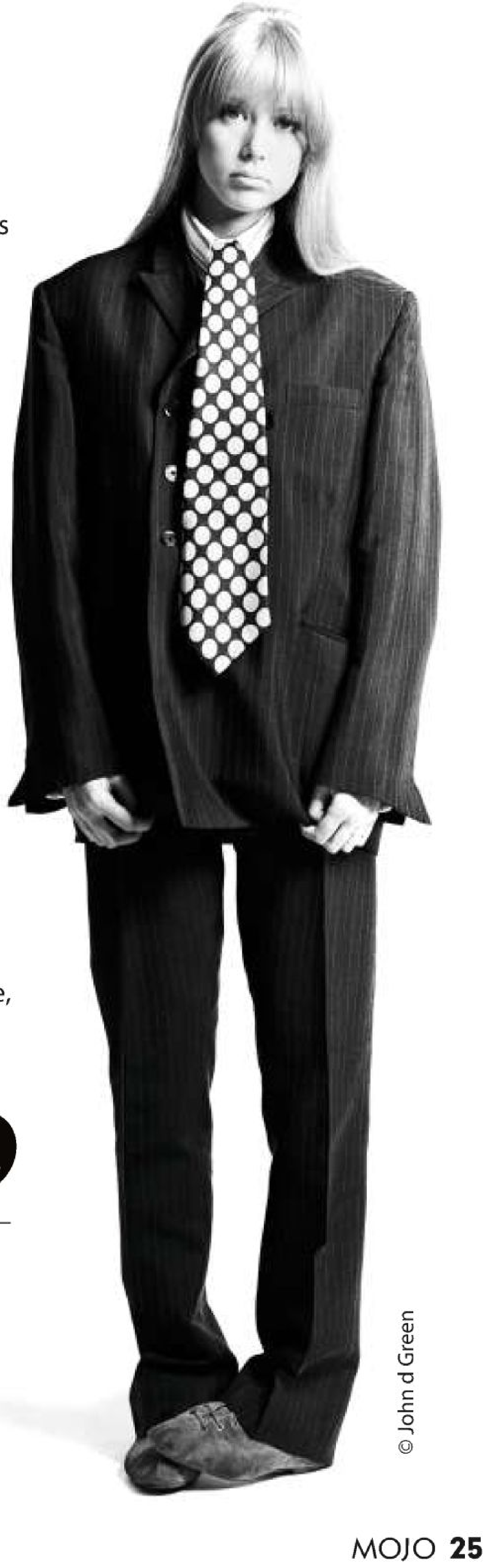
Dusty Springfield proved to be another interesting subject. "She rang to say she could only give me half an hour. So we spent half an hour taking the pictures, a couple of rolls of film, and that was it. I expected her to rush home, but she didn't go. Four hours later she was still there, as she needed a shoulder. It happened to be mine, endless cups of coffee. Telling me her life story. A very lovely talented girl, but sad."

Green rubbed shoulders with Mick Jagger, who visited his studio to see the contact sheets of model Chrissie Shrimpton, whom he was dating at the time, while Long John Baldry was his one-time runner.

"I have no misgivings about using the title 'Birds'," he says. "It was trendy at the time. If I was doing the book today, I wouldn't call them 'birds', though, as it is no longer popular and would not be cool."

PATTIE BOYD

The 23-year-old model married George Harrison a few months before Green took this picture in 1966. It was Pattie who inspired The Beatles went to meet the Maharishi in '67.



© John d Green

The Birds Of Britain exhibition by John d Green is at Snap Galleries until November 26. More info at www.snapgalleries.com. The Big Book Of Birds Of Britain is published in February 2017 by Ormond Yard Press.

SAMANTHA JUSTE

Mancunian Sandra Slater became a model, changed her name, was 'the disc girl' hostess on Top Of The Pops and, a year after this photo was taken, married Monkee Micky Dolenz.

© John d Green

JANE BIRKIN

When this pic was snapped, she'd appeared (very briefly) in Blow-Up, but the actor, director and singer had not yet met Serge Gainsbourg (or had a Hermès bag designed for her).

© John d Green

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD

At this point, Dusty's career was stumbling – she "needed a shoulder to cry on," says Green – and she was yet to begin work on her legendary *Dusty In Memphis*.

On January 7, 1980, the body of **Larry Williams**, the R&B star who wrote *Slow Down*, *Dizzy Miss Lizzy* and *Bony Moronie*, was found on the garage floor of his Laurel Canyon home, the victim of what the Los Angeles County Coroner deemed to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Williams' death is usually presented as just another sad end for a raucous '50s rock'n'roller. What isn't widely known is that he may also have been **one of the darkest and most dangerous cats in rock'n'roll history…**

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOHN E. REED

By **Mick Farren.**

Big Apple, big time: with fans outside the New York Coliseum, 1958.

MICHAEL OCHS, LEGENDARY ROCK archivist and brother of the late Phil Ochs, was one of the fortunate few who actually saw Larry Williams live in his mid-to-late-'50s glory, when he was riding high in the chart with hits like Short Fat Fannie, Bony Moronie and Dizzy Miss Lizzy. "It was a travelling Alan Freed show in Columbus, Ohio, 1958," he recalls. "Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Frankie Lymon, Danny And The Juniors, Dickie Do And The Don'ts, The Chantals, Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Larry Williams were on the bill. I thought Larry Williams was a minor talent. I thought Bony Moronie and Short Fat Fannie were derivative. I wasn't expecting anything from Larry.

"But he stole the show from everyone. He was a dynamo. At the end of his short set – everybody did two songs – he was like a madman. He grabbed the guitar from the guitarist, started playing that. He started playing the piano with his back to it. Then he grabs the sax from the sax player, jumps on top of the piano and starts wailing on that. He was fucking unbelievable. I was destroyed. I had no idea he'd be that good. I mean, I went there to see Chuck Berry."

For most of the rock world, Larry Williams is best known for the cover versions of his songs by the high legends of rock'n'roll. John Lennon was the greatest Larry Williams booster of them all. He instigated The Beatles' covers of Dizzy Miss Lizzy and Slow Down, perhaps attracted by their hard rock'n'roll drive and the comic-book lyrics. Singer Billy Vera, who produced the 1995 5-CD box set *The Specialty Story*, suggested that the appeal for Lennon was Williams, like Chuck Berry or Buddy Holly, didn't have one of the greatest voices, relying on power and phrasing rather than perfect pitch.

"Paul could do a spot-on imitation of Little Richard," said Vera. "He sounds more like Little Richard than anybody I ever heard, including Otis Redding. But Lennon didn't have the facility with his voice that Paul had, so he gravitated to Larry Williams."

The Beatles weren't the only stars to cover Williams' prime cuts. Bony Moronie was a Who live favourite and, of course, The Rolling Stones helped themselves to She Said Yeah, cutting it as an album track, featuring it in their 1964-65 live act and performing it on the TV show Hullabaloo in 1965. Paul McCartney, who included his own version on his *Run Devil Run* album, recalls being the one who hooked Mick Jagger onto the song: "Mick will deny it, but I distinctly remember playing it to him. He loved it and went and did it."

In the '50s, Larry Williams was little more than one name on a handful of leftfield jukebox hits like Stay by Maurice Williams And The Zodiacs, Jackie Wilson's Reet Petite, Jimmy Jones' Handy Man and Staggerlee by Lloyd Price. They got lots of play on the Rock-Ola, but those artists never showed up at the Brighton Essoldo on a package tour with Marty Wilde and Sounds Incorporated. Their picture was never in Melody Maker. By their very facelessness, they were also the records that made great covers for the first wave of bands with Futurama guitars and Vox AC30s. The Beatles by no means had a monopoly on Dizzy Miss Lizzy – the song was covered by everyone from The Big Three to Joe Brown And The Bruvvers.

WHEN INFORMATION ON LARRY WILLIAMS DID FILTER through, the standard texts recounted how he was born Lawrence E. Williams in New Orleans in 1935, just five months after Elvis Presley arrived further up the Mississippi in Tupelo. The Williams family joined the tide of immigrants to California, but baby Larry was stashed with an aunt in Chicago until he was 10 years old, when he rejoined his parents in Oakland, then a World War II defence industry boom-town.

Oakland became the home of the Black Panthers and a hotbed of unrest in the '60s, but in the late '40s, as Williams reached his teens, the military industrial overkill of the Cold War was in high gear. Oakland's instalment-plan boom went right on yielding beaucoup bucks to spend on cheap guitars and crummy cars, while hamburgers sizzled on an open grill night and day. Sharkskin suits were a dollar down and a dollar a week, and so was an upright piano.

Early signs of a serious musical inclination came when Williams joined Oscar Monroe's Teardrops in his mid-teens, playing bass. When Monroe was killed in a car crash, the Teardrops disbanded but Larry continued, undaunted. He formed The Lemondrops and, with a local Bay Area following, sent his first demo to Art Rupe, president of the LA-based Specialty label, but received no offers. Seemingly doomed to being nothing more than an Oakland bar band, The Lemondrops fell apart – but Larry had spotted a possible back door to the R&B business, and maybe even to a record deal.

Back in New Orleans, on a visit with friends and family, he hooked up with his second cousin, Lloyd Price, whose 1953 Number 1 Specialty hit Lawdy Miss Clawdy was shortly to be covered by Elvis Presley. Williams was hired by Price as a gopher and replacement musician and, for a while, it seemed he was on his way. When Lloyd was drafted, Williams returned to New Orleans to play a similar musician/roadie role for Roy Brown and Percy Mayfield. He even did a stint as Fats Domino's driver.

Larry couldn't have gone back to New Orleans at a more opportune time. He was in the city at its 20th-century peak of bustling decadence, when everyone from Louisiana Governor 'Uncle' Earl Long on down seemed bent on having – as Hank Williams put it – "big fun on the bayou". The governor was openly involved with local stripper Blaze Starr, while his political foes attempted to have him declared legally insane. Corruption was at an all-time high. As one wag put it, "If you couldn't find it on Bourbon Street, it probably hadn't been thought of."

Vice cops supplemented their income by pimping, narco agents sold dope, while the streets were run by the "downtown tribes" – gangs with a dash of voodoo ritual just to keep everyone guessing.

Larry showed up in the heyday of clubs like the Robin Hood and the Dew Drop Inn on LaSalle Street, the Poodle Patio on Bourbon, the Monkey Bar on Canal, the Holiday House on Louisiana Avenue and Natal's Safari Room in Jefferson Parish. In these venues, Fats Domino, Dave Bartholomew, Smiley Lewis, Professor Longhair, Huey Smith and Allen Toussaint held court, and visiting stars – Ike Turner, Ray Charles, James Brown – received the warmest of welcomes.

"I guess I first met Larry in, say, 1953 in New Orleans," recalled Herb Hardesty, who was Fats' sax player at the time. "He'd hang out at The Dew Drop Inn, another place called Fosters, Shuttleland. Anywhere there was a lot of entertainment. He hung out with musicians. I wouldn't like to say who he was particular friends with. He was friendly with everyone."

Specialty
LAWDY MISS CLAWDY
LLOYD PRICE
ABC-PARAMOUNT
45-9792
JUST BECAUSE
LLOYD PRICE and His Orchestra

Courtesy Fantasy/Concord Music Group

From the late '40s to the mid-'60s, Cosimo Matassa's tiny studio on Dumaine Street, right across from a musical hangout and ad-hoc employment exchange called Johnny's Restaurant, was the creative ground zero for this jam of creative talent. It was where Little Richard cut Tutti Frutti, Smiley Lewis cut I Hear You Knocking; the stellar roster of Matassa's is nothing less than a directory of R&B immortals.

Through the '50s, the house band – known unofficially as "the funk club" – was led by drummer Earl Palmer. It was at the studio on Dumaine Street that Williams formed the relationship with Palmer that led to the sessions that gave the world Short Fat Fannie and the other early Larry Williams classics. It seems probable that Williams was using his downtime to explore the pimp and crim back-alleys as he expanded what came to be referred to as his "dark side".

Williams would have found himself wheeling and dealing through the turf of the Gangster Molls And Baby Dolls, a gang of pimps and whores from Perdido Street. "Everyone in this group dressed as outlandishly as possible," wrote Dr. John in his book Under A Hoodoo Moon. "The women wore eye-popping dresses; the ones who looked highest priced wore ultra-sharp women's suits, but with see-through bras underneath. Others wore slit miniskirts showing lace panties, stiletto heels, and flowery low-cut blouses. The pimps got decked out in acey-deucy Stetsons with cocked brims, jelly-roll-peg zoot suits, one-button roll coats with wide lapels and zebra-skinned shoes."

> "THE PIMPS GOT DECKED OUT IN ACEY-DEUCY STETSONS AND JELLY-ROLL-PEG ZOOT SUITS."
>
> DR. JOHN

Dr. John described the tribes, "cutting up, shakin' the bacon and carrying on, and everyone would back off to let them start high-steppin'. And you had best back off, too, because they took their kicks seriously. They were real rowdy. Cats would brandish switchblades, and whip them out in your face if you got too close."

According to Herb Hardesty, though, Williams saw little of this scene during his time in New Orleans: "I knew him as a gentleman, a fine person. I don't know about anything he did other than the good things."

So maybe Larry Williams didn't cross over to the dark side until he left New Orleans for LA. Maybe.

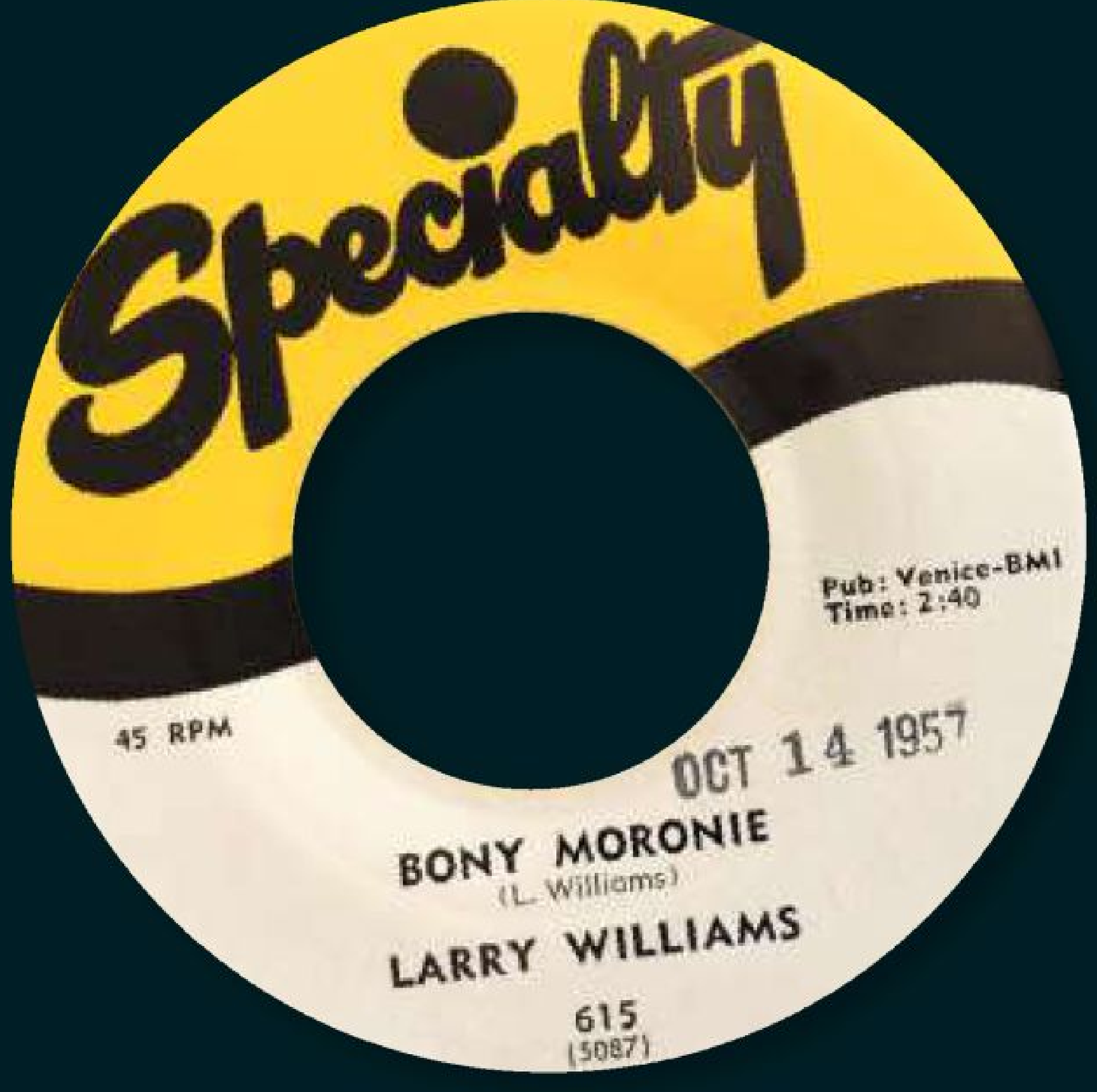
WHEN LLOYD PRICE CAME BACK FROM THE ARMY, Larry decided to try once more for a recording career of his own. Since his cousin was one of the established stars at Specialty, Art Rupe was the obvious target. Rupe, born Arthur Goldberg in 1917, was the classic Jewish player in the black R&B business. He'd founded Specialty in 1947 and immediately had a number of jump blues hits with artists like Roy Milton and Joe Lutcher. He also had a deep appreciation for gospel music and quickly amassed a roster of popular and profitable gospel artists like The Pilgrim Travellers, The Soul Stirrers, Brother Joe May, and the original Gospel Harmonettes. His sympathy for a ranting, quasi-gospel sound initially attracted him to some of his secular hitmakers like Little Richard and Don And Dewey.

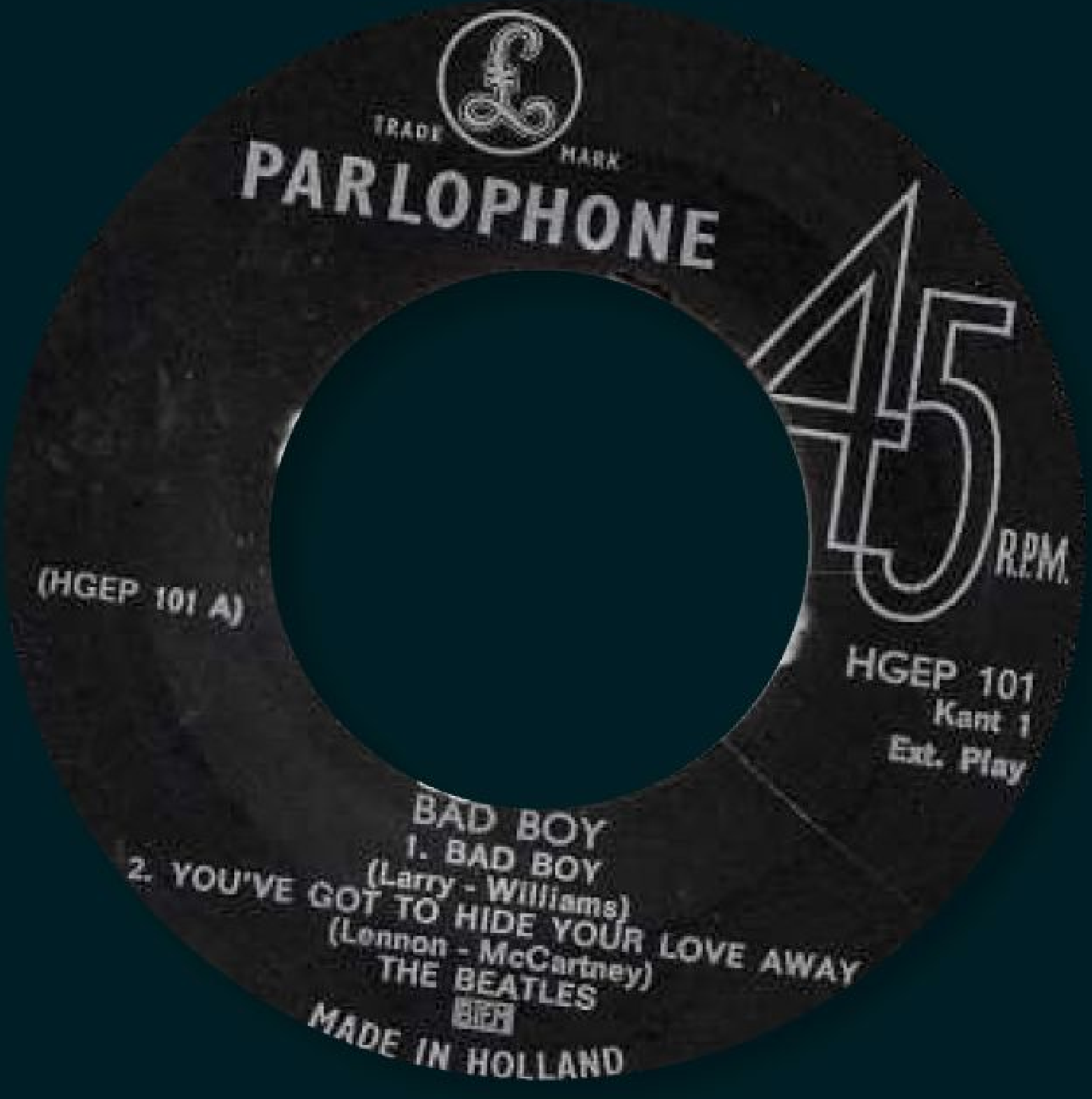
Unfortunately, this sympathy didn't extend to Larry Williams. That might have been the end of the story if external forces hadn't pushed Rupe into a panic in the summer of 1956. On top of a messy and expensive divorce from his wife Lena, he'd had a serious falling out with Lloyd Price. To further complicate matters, Little Richard, after a near-death experience in an airliner over Australia, was wrestling with the idea of leaving rock'n'roll and turning to God. Rupe wanted two things out of life: he wanted to lay some payback on Price and find a replacement for Richard. Bit by bit, he realised that Larry Williams might provide both.

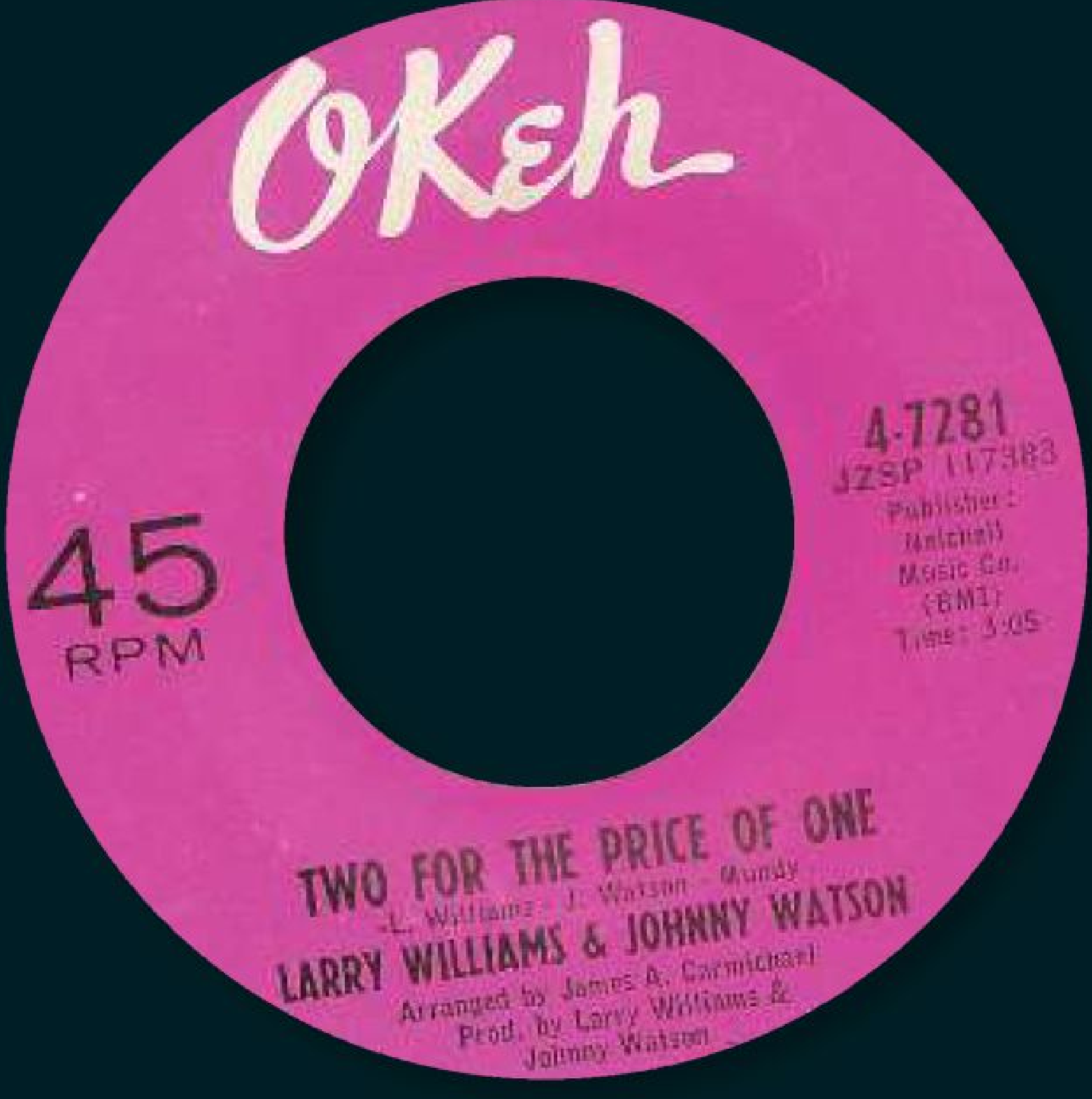
After leaving Specialty, Price had started releasing his new material on his own KRC label. The first offering was Just Because and Rupe decided to mess with Price by putting out a spoiler single, a cover of the same tune. Probably to add insult to injury, he called in Price's cousin Larry to cut the competing version. Williams seems to have had no qualms about stitching up his kin and former employer.

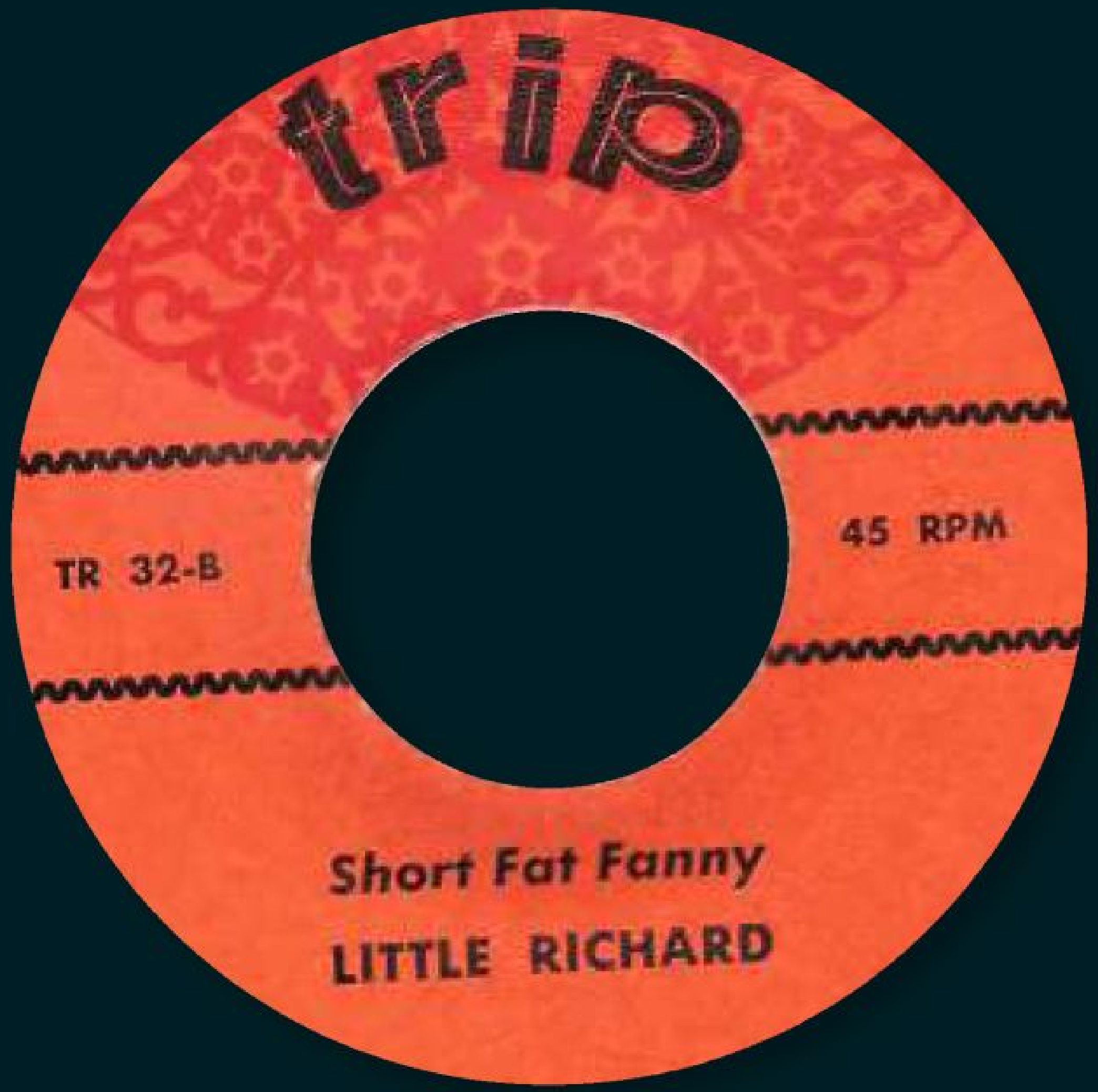
Larry's version of Just Because did little damage to the sales of the Lloyd Price original, which made the Top 40, but Rupe booked Larry to do another session. Produced by Bumps Blackwell and with a band built around Williams' piano and the genius timing of Earl Palmer, with the guitar chops of Rene Hall and Jesse James Jones (who usually played with H-Bomb Ferguson) on tenor sax, Larry recorded High School Dance (written by the young Sonny Bono). Two bits of filler, Charm Bracelet and Jockomo, were also cut, along with a Williams original titled Short Fat Fannie that took everyone by surprise because it was close enough to the Little Richard hit formula to be in with a chance.

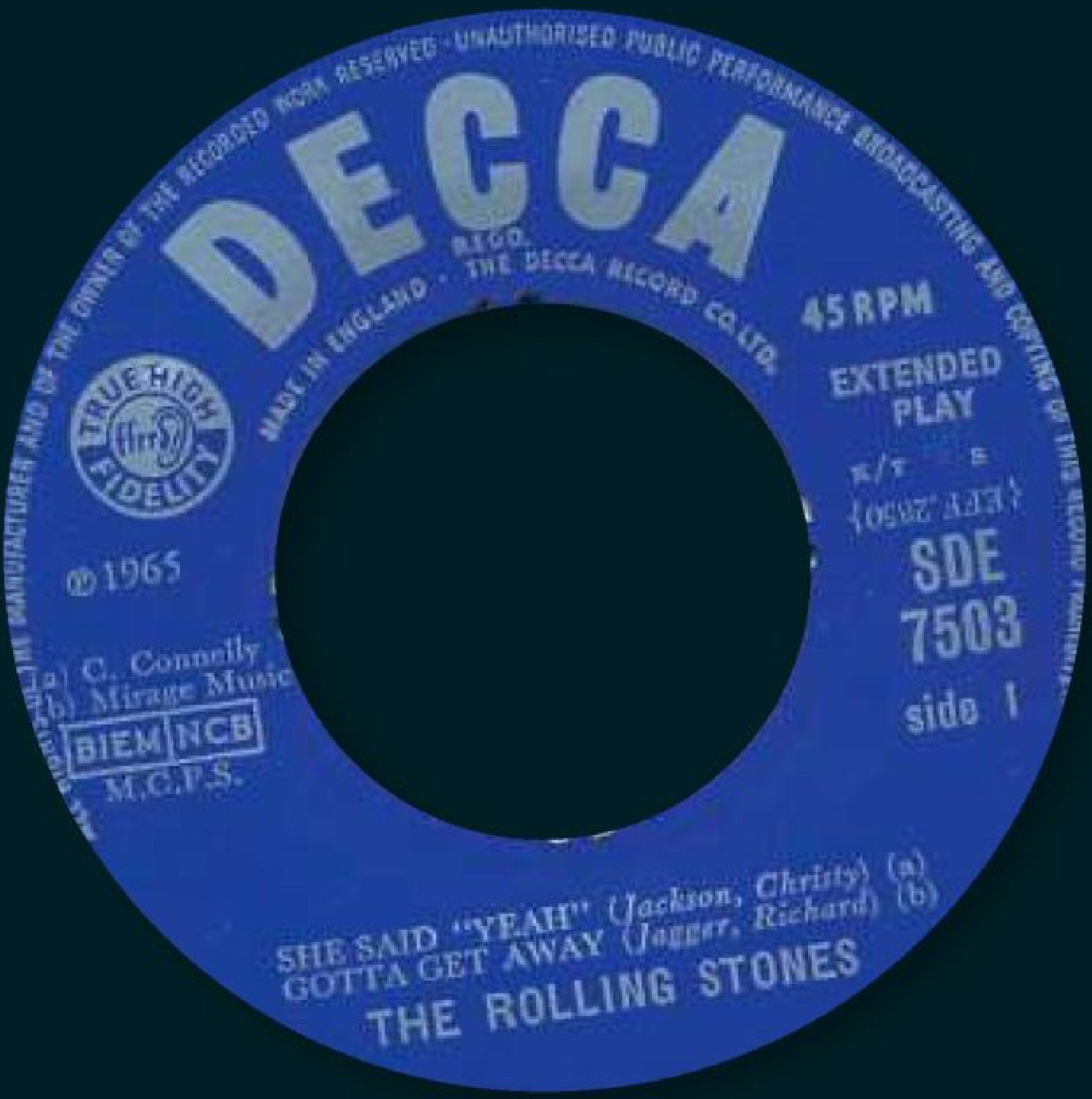
In addition to an appreciation of hot R&B, Art Rupe also recognised the value of a strong novelty hit. He'd scored with ➢

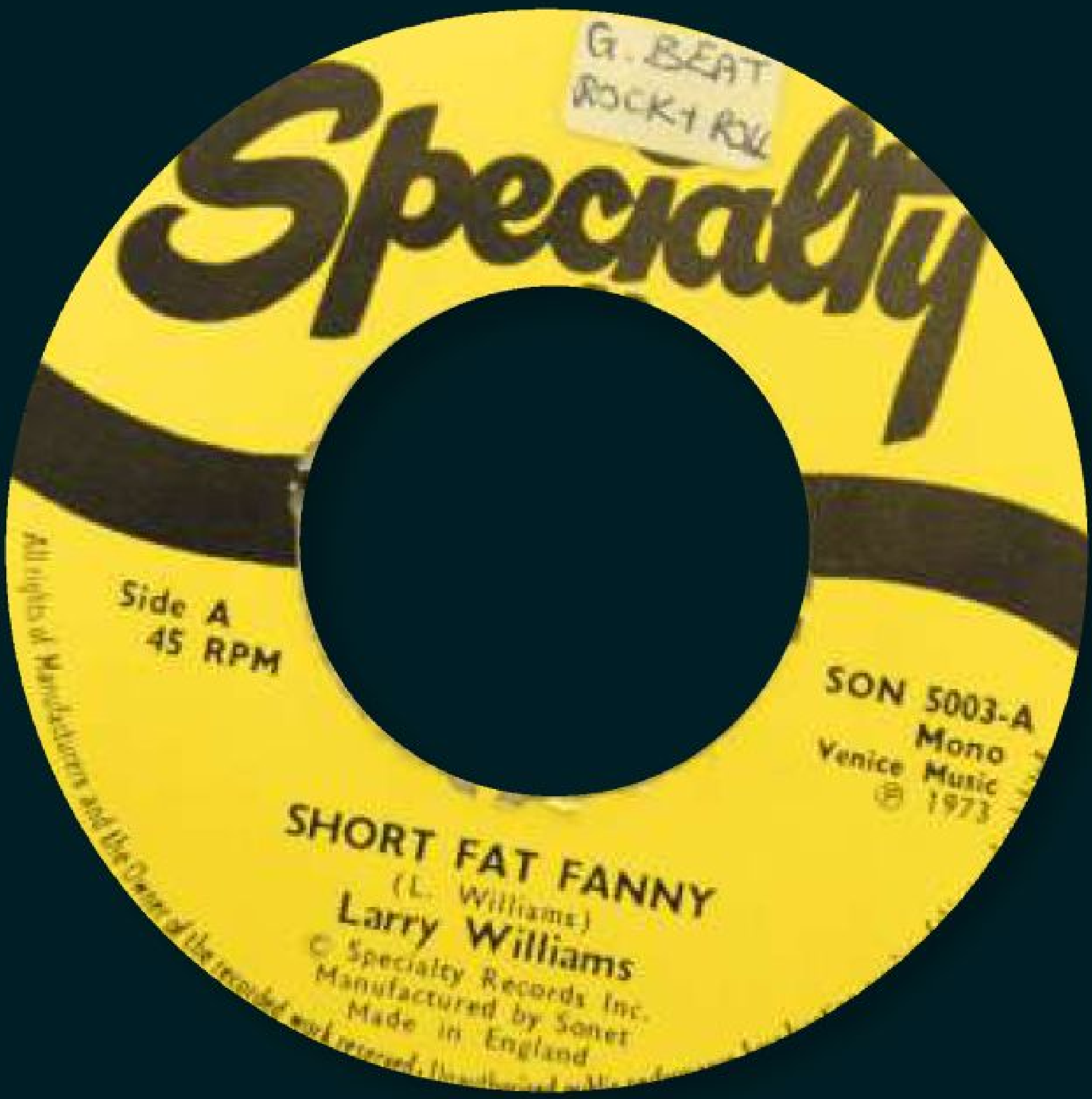

Specialty
Pub: Venice-BMI
Time: 2:40
45 RPM
OCT 14 1957
BONY MORONIE
(L. Williams)
LARRY WILLIAMS
615
(5087)

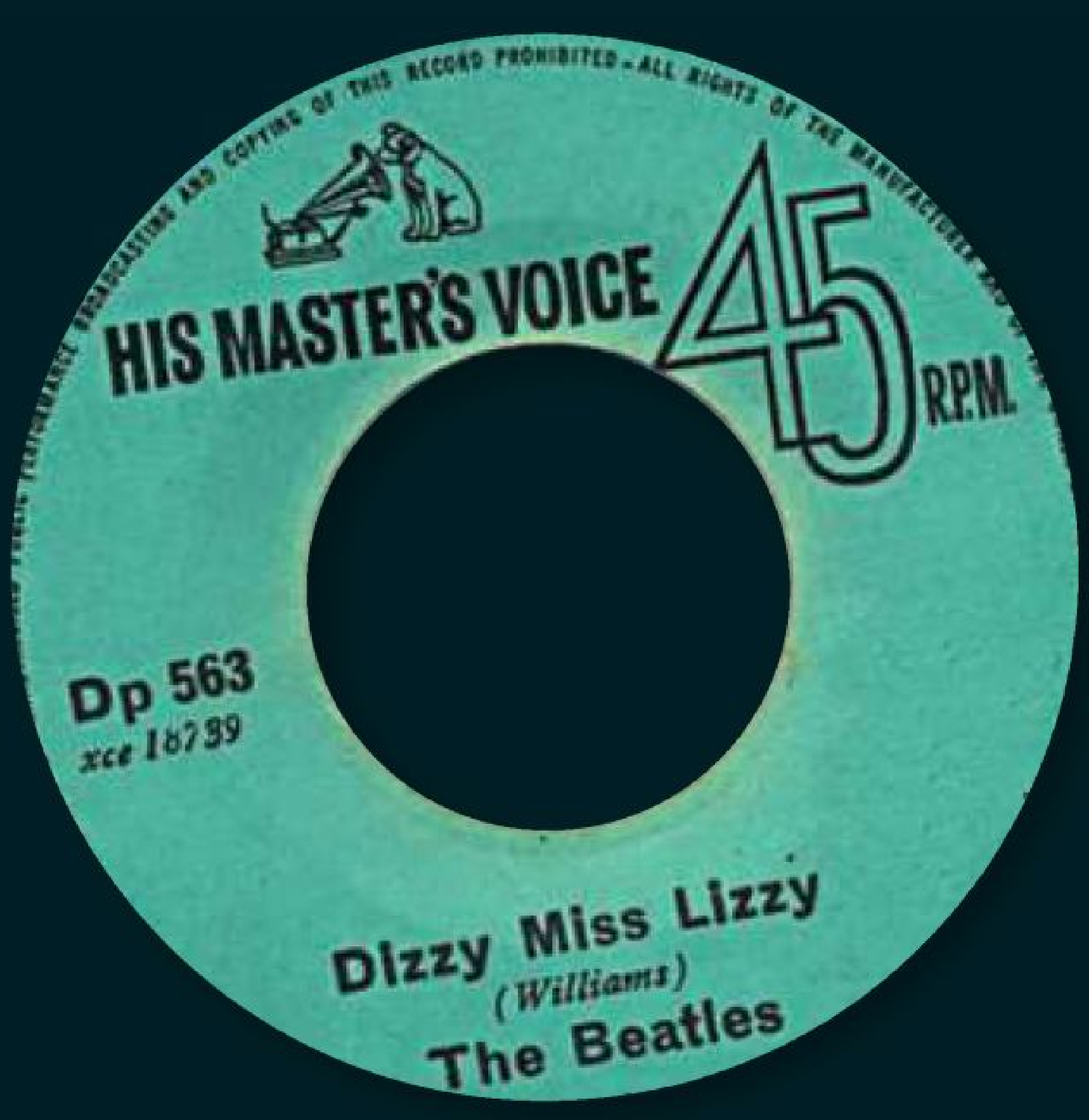

TRADE MARK
PARLOPHONE
45 R.P.M.
(HGEP 101 A)
HGEP 101
Kant 1
Ext. Play
BAD BOY
1. BAD BOY
(Larry - Williams)
2. YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE YOUR LOVE AWAY
(Lennon - McCartney)
THE BEATLES
BIEM
MADE IN HOLLAND

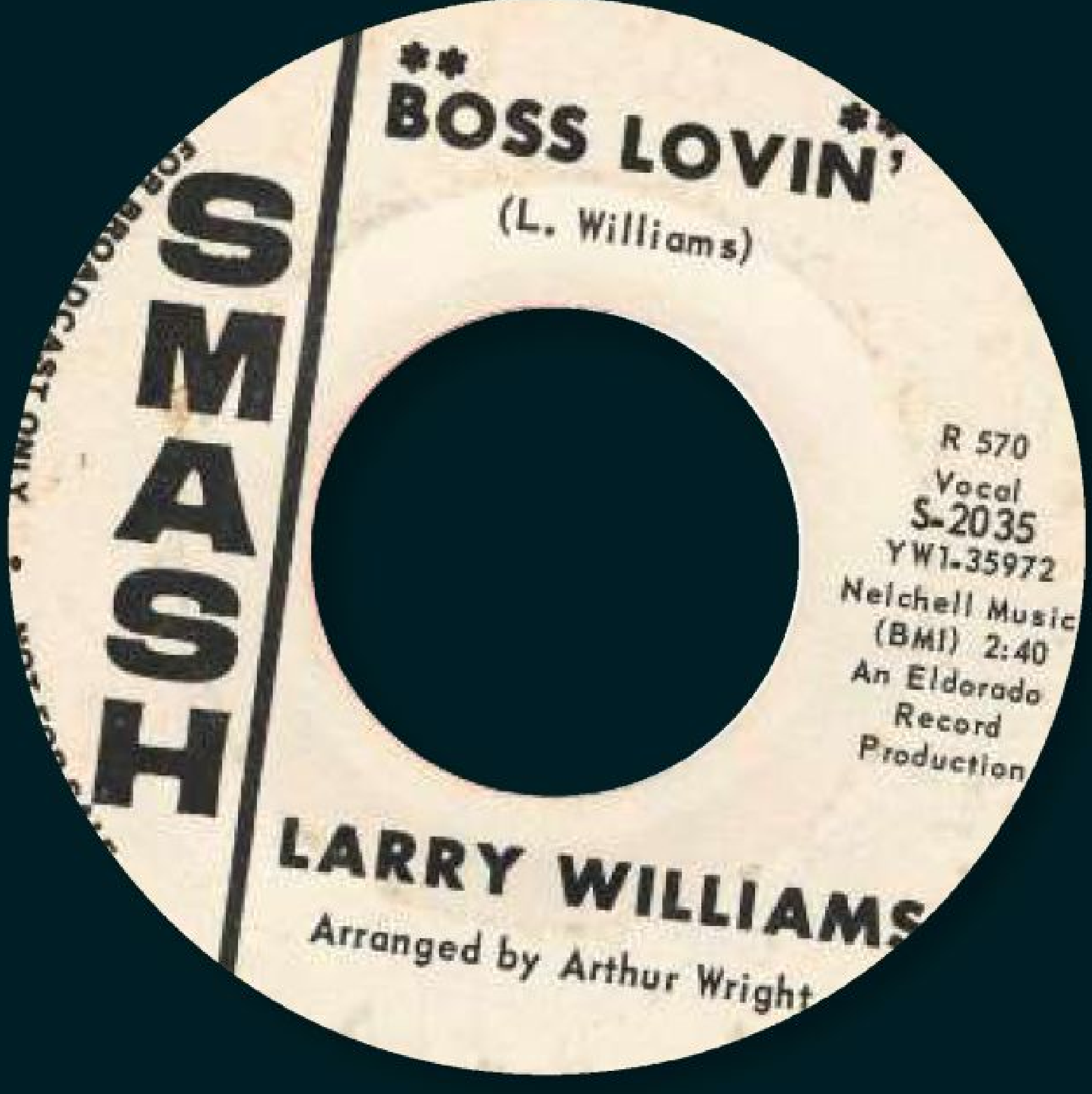

OKeh
45
RPM
4-7281
JZSP 117383
Publisher:
Nelchell
Music Co.
(BMI)
Time: 3:05
TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE
-L. Williams - J. Watson - Mundy
LARRY WILLIAMS & JOHNNY WATSON
Arranged by James A. Carmichael
Prod. by Larry Williams &
Johnny Watson

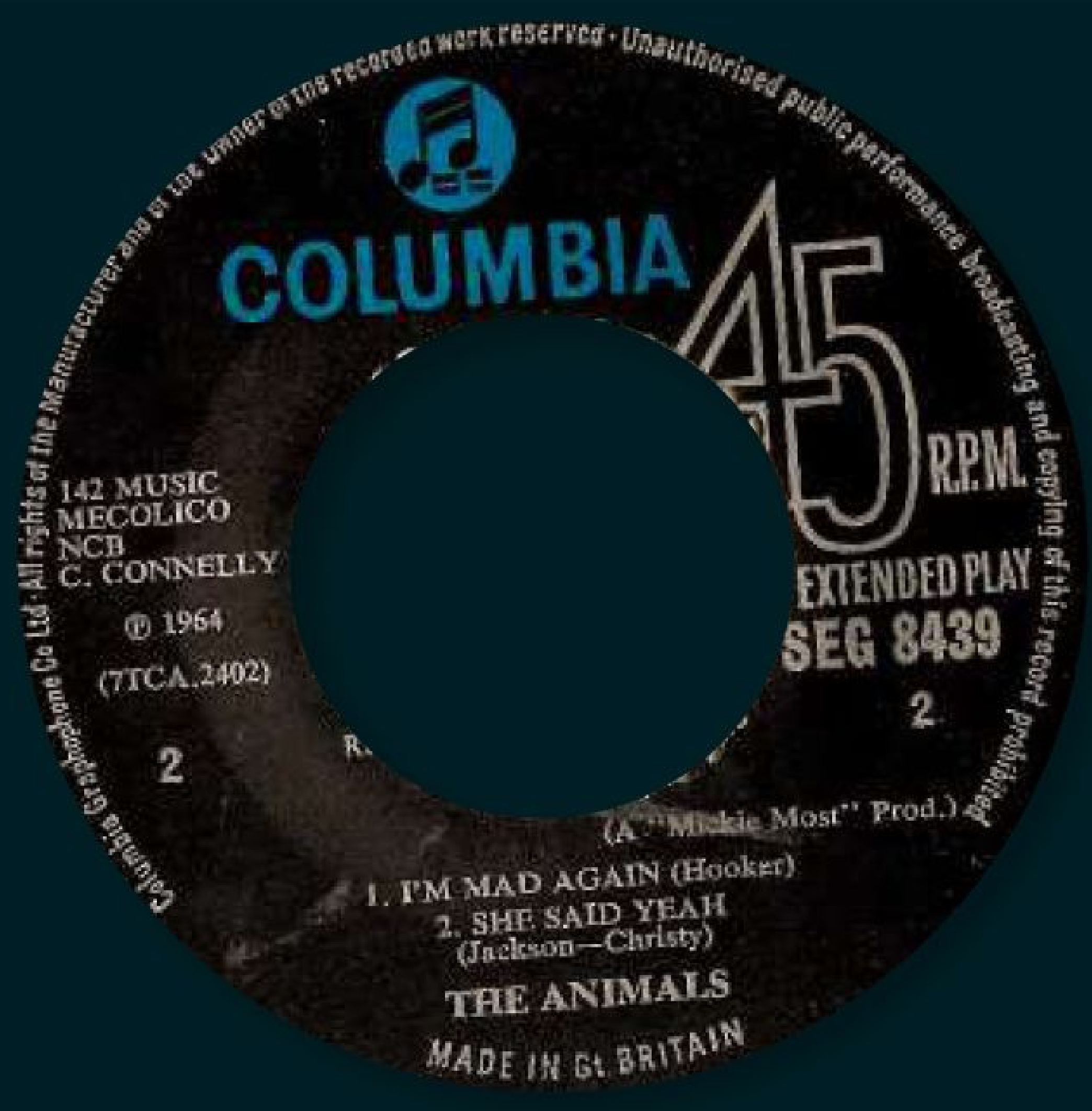

trip
TR 32-B
45 RPM
Short Fat Fanny
LITTLE RICHARD

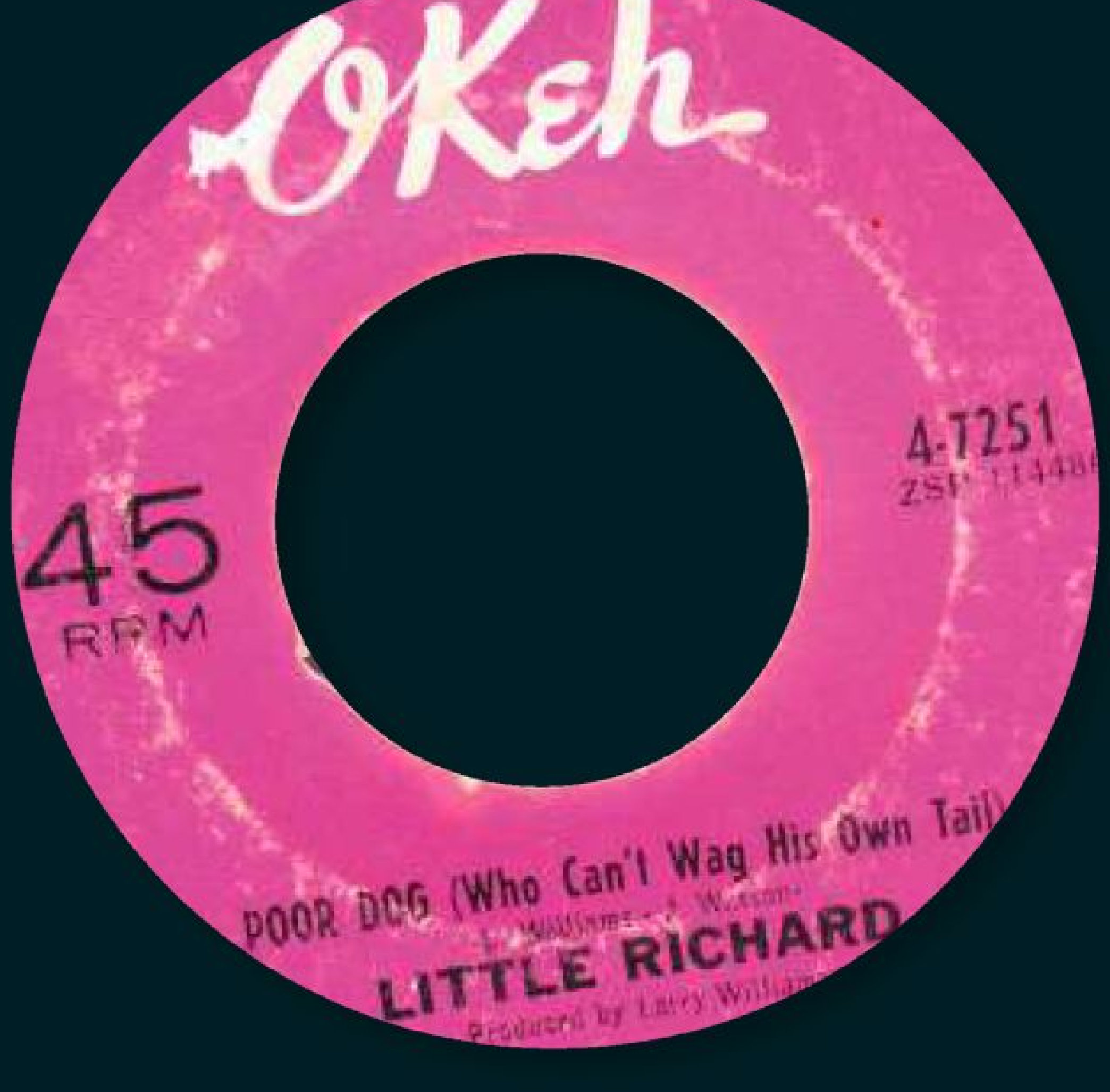

DECCA
REGD. THE DECCA RECORD CO. LTD.
MADE IN ENGLAND
TRUE HIGH FIDELITY
ffrr
45 RPM
EXTENDED PLAY
SDE
7503
side 1
℗ 1965
(a) C. Connelly
(b) Mirage Music
BIEM NCB
M.C.P.S.
SHE SAID "YEAH" (Jackson, Christy) (a)
GOTTA GET AWAY (Jagger, Richard) (b)
THE ROLLING STONES

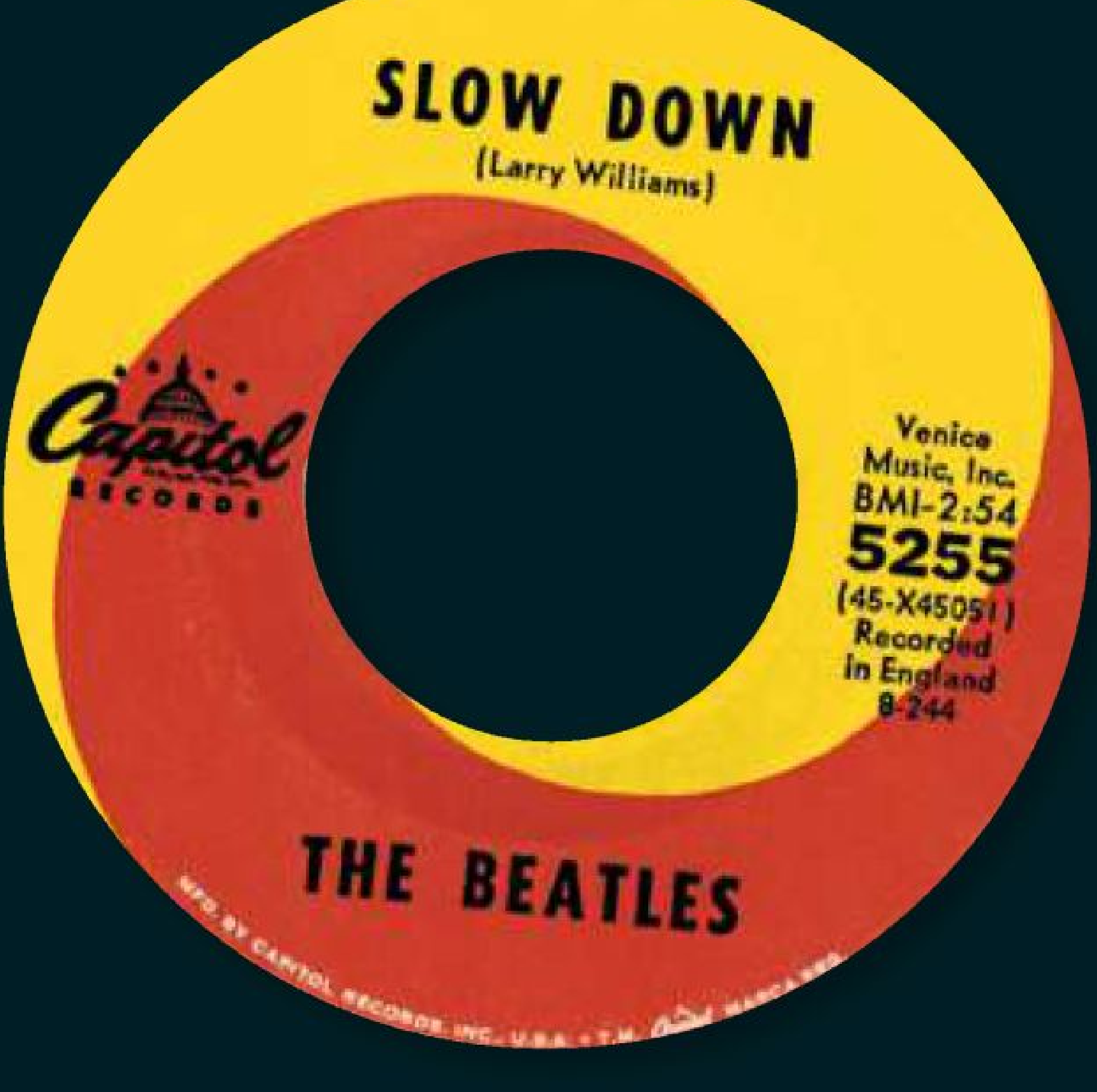

G. BEAT
ROCK + ROLL
Specialty
Side A
45 RPM
SON 5003-A
Mono
Venice Music
℗ 1973
SHORT FAT FANNY
(L. Williams)
Larry Williams
© Specialty Records Inc.
Manufactured by Sonet
Made in England

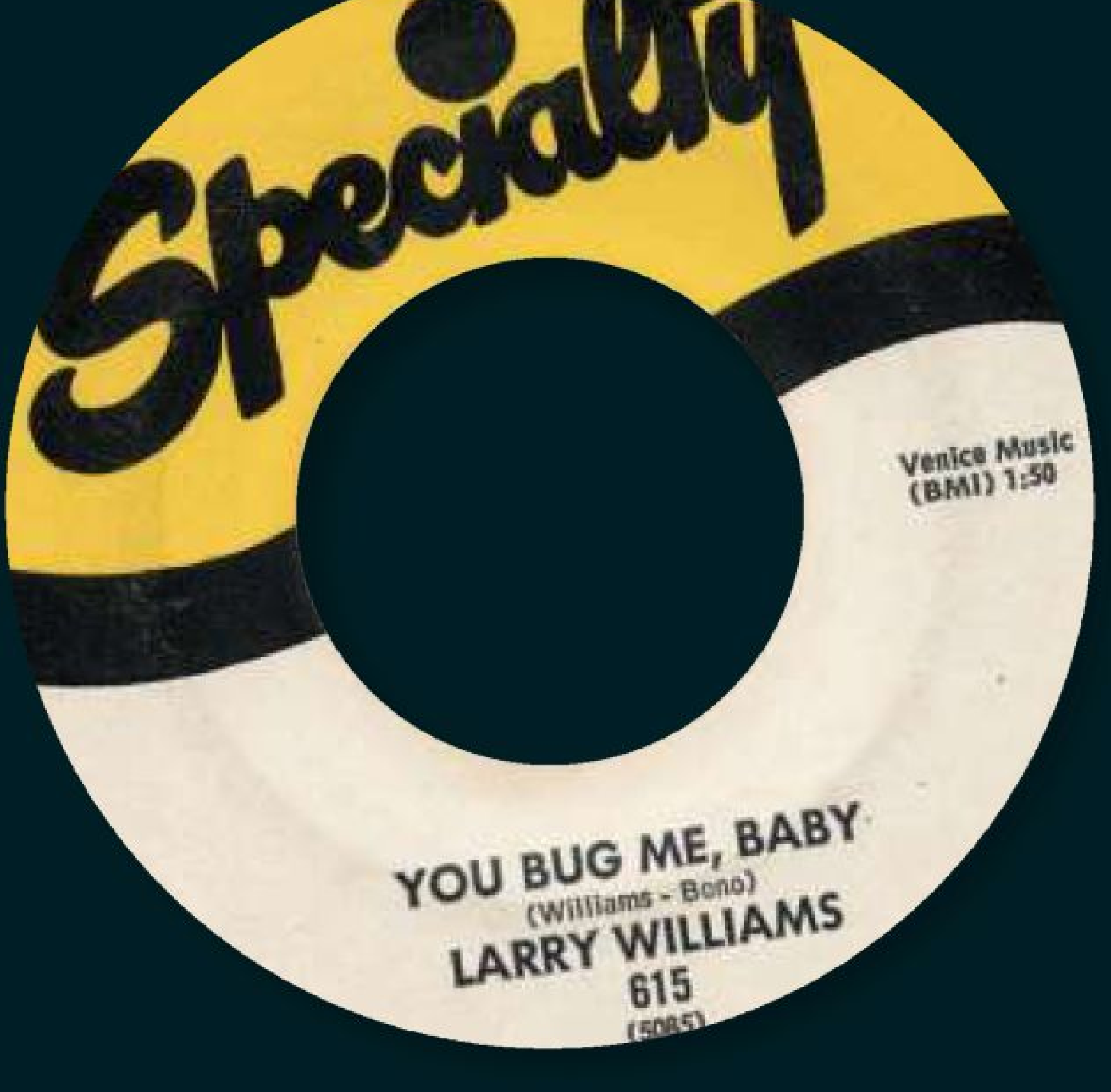

HIS MASTER'S VOICE
45 R.P.M.
Dp 563
xce 16739
Dizzy Miss Lizzy
(Williams)
The Beatles


SMASH
BOSS LOVIN'
(L. Williams)
R 570
Vocal
S-2035
YW1-35972
Nelchell Music
(BMI) 2:40
An Eldorado
Record
Production
LARRY WILLIAMS
Arranged by Arthur Wright


COLUMBIA
45 R.P.M.
EXTENDED PLAY
SEG 8439
2
142 MUSIC
MECOLICO
NCB
C. CONNELLY
℗ 1964
(7TCA.2402)
2
(A "Mickie Most" Prod.)
1. I'M MAD AGAIN (Hooker)
2. SHE SAID YEAH
(Jackson—Christy)
THE ANIMALS
MADE IN Gt. BRITAIN


OKeh
45
RPM
4-7251
POOR DOG (Who Can't Wag His Own Tail)
LITTLE RICHARD


SLOW DOWN
(Larry Williams)
Capitol
RECORDS
Venice
Music, Inc.
BMI-2:54
5255
(45-X45051)
Recorded
in England
B-244
THE BEATLES


Specialty
Venice Music
(BMI) 1:50
YOU BUG ME, BABY
(Williams - Bono)
LARRY WILLIAMS
615
(5085)

> "LARRY WAS A VERY STREET GUY AND THE FIRST CAT TO PIONEER A LOT OF THINGS MUSICALLY."
>
> BOBBY WOMACK

➢ Joe Liggins' Rag Mop and Pink Champagne and, although we now think of it as a golden classic, Little Richard's Tutti Frutti had started out as a weird, hard-driving, quirky joke. Rupe figured that Short Fat Fannie was a viable substitute if his first-magnitude star deserted him for the Lord.

In May 1957, Rupe released Short Fat Fannie and Richard's Jenny Jenny in deliberate tandem – the King and the raw young pretender – and both made the Top 10. At first the hits came in quick succession: Bony Moronie, Dizzy Miss Lizzy. Even when the songs didn't reach the upper slopes of the charts, they were still high quality raunch: Bad Boy, You Bug Me Baby, Slow Down, She Said Yeah, Marie, Marie and School Girl were all classics of stripped-down '50s rock in overdrive.

Dr. John tells how Larry was driving around New Orleans in a white El Dorado with gold letters on the side spelling out 'Short Fat Fannie' – "the name of the hit that paid for the Caddy". Even back then Williams seems to have had his underworld contacts and wielded definite clout on the street. As Dr. John notes, the fact that Larry could leave the car parked on less-than-secure Claiborne Avenue "and not get nothing ripped off, impressed the hell out of me".

Williams didn't achieve the sales he deserved on those Specialty discs, but that wasn't simply down to him not catching the public imagination. The release of Short Fat Fannie pretty much coincided with the payola epidemic – the wholesale expectation of pay-to-play bribes for the most powerful AM disc jockeys. While he was struggling to make it as big as Little Richard, the gifts of a couple of bottles of Scotch or sending over a hooker had escalated to demands for major cash payments before a record received airplay.

Art Rupe was one of the last hold-outs against this almost universal corruption and his determination to play a clean game progressively damaged the sales of Specialty singles. It wasn't until 1958 or '59 that he finally caved in and started handing the jocks envelopes stuffed with $50s and $100s. By that time, much of Larry Williams' best work had come and gone with little or no radio time.

Williams was also about to slam into a disastrous wall in the form of the LAPD undercover narco detectives who busted him on a possession-for-sale rap. When the judge handed down jailtime, Williams' single of the moment, I Can't Stop Loving You, vanished without trace and Specialty dropped his contract.

LARRY WAS RELEASED FROM JAIL IN 1962 AND FOUND that the entire face of the music industry had changed. Congressional hearings had cleaned up radio payola and broken Alan Freed and many of the original wild rock'n'roll DJs. The power was now being wielded by Dick Clark and American Bandstand, sanitised teen idols – the Bobbies, the Frankies and Fabian – dominated radio play and record sales, and the British invasion and the sophistication of Motown were just around the corner.

R&B had become controlled, and the word control wasn't in Larry Williams' vocabulary. He verged on being an anachronism – a leftover '50s rock shouter – but he wasn't without his supporters. For a while he was signed to Chess, a relationship that produced the formidable, if largely ignored, My Baby's Got Soul. More significantly Williams formed a working alliance with Johnny 'Guitar' Watson. Together, they toured the UK in 1965 with Phillip Goodhand-Tait And The Stormsville Shakers. Live tapes from those shows wound up as the album *The Larry Williams Show*; in 1967 they would also release the studio album, *Two For The Price Of One*, famous for its cover photo of the two running buddies and their matching Cadillacs.

"We played Leighton Baths, Manchester's Twisted Wheel and The Ricky Tick Plaza in Guildford," remembered Shakers bassist Kirk Riddle. "[Larry and Johnny] kept pretty much to themselves. We'd heard the rumours of pimping and prostitution, drugs, but we saw nothing. They were as clean as a whistle. On-stage they were incredible. They steamed like a bastard."

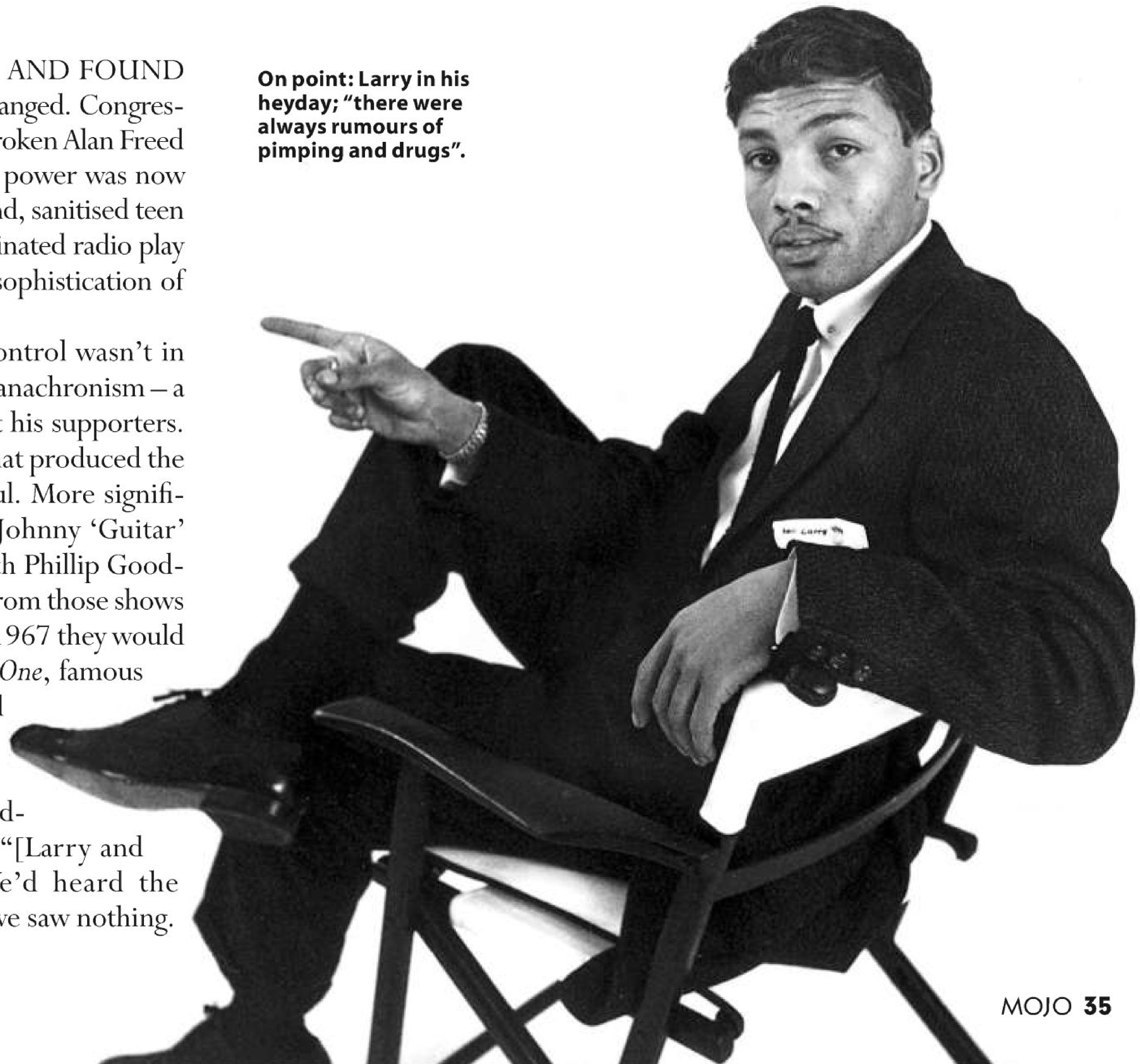
"They were a pair of rascals," recalled the Shakers' saxophonist David Sherrington. "We recorded this album at Decca, a really old-fashioned studio with technicians in white coats and a tea lady. Johnny and Larry were blown away. The tea lady would bring in a plate of doughnuts with the tea urn and they loved sweet things, so they'd just descend on the doughnuts. I never saw them smoke a joint or take a drink or anything, but when they hit the stage every night they were just out-there, loaded."

"Larry Williams and I first met through Johnny 'Guitar' Watson in 1961 or '62," remembered soul man Bobby Womack. "They were very tight. My first impression of Larry was that he was a very street guy. A pimp kind of guy. Sam Cooke told me that Larry was the first cat to pioneer a lot of things musically, but he watched a lot of other people take his style. Because of that he had a lot of resentment."

During this time Larry also worked as a producer and talent scout for the OKeh label, a part of Columbia. Arguably his finest achievement there was *Little Richard Sings His Greatest Hits – Recorded Live*. Williams' flash of brilliance was to punctuate the songs with the first, and maybe finest, recorded examples of Little Richard whipping up a crowd with his freeform whooping, screaming and boasting that "I am the most beautiful man in the world."

The single, Nobody, that Williams and Johnny 'Guitar' Watson produced for the band Kaleidoscope is also a major achievement of their mid-'60s period. In the wake of the Monterey Pop Festival, where Otis Redding proved that a psychedelic rock audience could be turned on by soul, everyone started looking at how to exploit the crossover. Larry and Johnny were there on the bandwagon. Their plan was to overlay psychedelic elements – guitar feedback, compressed vocal sounds, even sitar drones – over a funk-solid R&B rhythm section. They chose local up-and-coming psychedelic band Kaleidoscope as the vehicle for this experiment, and pulled in musicians from their classic Specialty sessions to lay down the beat.

Kaleidoscope didn't actually play at the Monterey Festival, but they did the next best thing. The deal was The Grateful Dead ➢



On point: Larry in his heyday; "there were always rumours of pimping and drugs".

Courtesy Fantasy/Concord Music Group

Rock'n'roll brothers: Johnny and Larry recording in Los Angeles, May 17, 1967.

< weren't going to play, so Kaleidoscope would fill in for them. But The Grateful Dead performed and Kaleidoscope finished up playing for the Hell's Angels out in front of the festival.

Chester Crill, who played violin and keyboards with the band, recalls, "I knew from an earlier office meeting that they were looking for an R&B-meets-flower power sound, but when I found out Paul Humphries was the drummer on the session I was shitting in my shoes."

Chris Darrow, Kaleidoscope's guitarist, confirms the sense of awe. "Larry Williams and Johnny 'Guitar' Watson were local heroes. We were 20, 21 years of age and we were presented with the situation of recording with them, as they ran OKeh Records locally. Chester and I were so stoked we were going to record for OKeh! My Dad was a jazz collector. We were following Screamin' Jay Hawkins and The Treniers."

Nobody was championed by DJ Wolfman Jack, but it wasn't the hit all expected. A few years later it was covered by Three Dog Night, with little credit given to Kaleidoscope – or Watson and Williams – for creating the original.

As far as his own stardom was concerned, Larry spent the '60s and '70s running behind the bus rather than riding it. In the late '70s he even tried the disco bandwagon with a funk album on Fantasy. It got nowhere. Etta James implies that years of disappointment and a sense of having been short-changed by destiny took its toll: "Larry was sad from never becoming a big star like Lloyd Price or Jackie Wilson. It wasn't that he lacked talent. Larry could tear up a piano, he was in a class with all those New Orleans cats – Professor Longhair, Fats, Allen Toussaint."

It's also likely that he felt, like many of the other original rockers, he was a victim of the late-'50s crackdown that attempted to purge the wildness out of American pop. Larry Williams couldn't be blamed for thinking that a golden age had been wantonly wiped out by fate, the government and the California State penal system – and his best shot at fame had tanked right along with it.

THE LARRY WILLIAMS SHOW
Featuring JOHNNY 'GUITAR' WATSON
with the STORMSVILLE SHAKERS
Larry Williams & Johnny Watson
Two For The Price Of One
OKeh
OKeh STEREO
Little Richard's Greatest Hits
Lucille
The Girl Can't Help It
Tutti Frutti
Send Me Some Lovin'
Long Tall Sally
True Fine Mama
Jenny, Jenny
Good Golly Miss Molly
Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On
Anyway You Want Me
You Gotta Feel It
Get Down With It
Recorded Live

> "HE HAD HIS WOMEN STEALING FOR HIM. AND THEY WOULDN'T BE COPPING NO NICK-NACKS."
>
> ETTA JAMES

TO LOCATE THE DARK UNDERWORLD SIDE of Larry Williams, just follow the money. Although his musical career was floundering from 1962 to his death in 1980, Williams always had more than enough cash to live like a star. Clothes, cars, women, a half-a-million-dollar house in Hollywood's Laurel Canyon – fame may have waned, but fortune remained. Etta James, in her autobiography Rage To Survive, co-written with David Ritz, makes it clear. "When all of us were struggling with too much dope and too little money, Larry kept himself together. The IRS came and took Johnny's house while Larry was still raking it in. Larry had dough 'til the end."

The source of Larry's money is handily nutshelled in part of a conversation from the early '70s recounted by singer Billy Vera. While touring with The Shirelles on the rock nostalgia circuit, Vera and the girls passed the time telling stories of the old days. When Larry's name came up, the three-woman singing group were uncompromising: "He was a pimp, and every girl he met, he was trying to turn them out." Etta James expanded on the same theme: "He had his women – drag broads, thieves, high-priced hookers – stealing for him day and night. And they wouldn't be copping no nick-nacks. They'd be dropping off coats of fine ermine and fabulous fox."

James described how Larry was "the cat who looked like Superfly before Superfly flew", the "Zulu King" who ran his drugs, music and women like a flamboyant ringmaster, and whose silver platform shoes had live goldfish swimming in the Lucite heels: "He'd sport enormous furry hats with coloured feathers reaching to the sky, red

Getty, courtesy Fantasy/Concord Music Group

silk shirts with collars as long as airplane wings, rings on every finger, an overcoat of fire-red leather."

His cars were as flash and gaudy as his clothes, and he had a near-fetish for white Cadillac El Dorados in the days when Caddies were still mighty kings of the highway. In the '60s, the Caddies became even more elaborate. It was Etta James' turn to be impressed by a white El Dorado with a huge gold Taurus the Bull on the hood that matched the 18-carat zodiac sign "with flaming ruby eyes" that Larry wore round his neck. Johnny 'Guitar' Watson, in a conversation with writer Paul Trynka, fleshed out more details of the life he led during the time he and Larry were running buddies.

"Wild times? Are you kidding? Yeah man, they were so – at the time everyone was doing drugs, even myself. I didn't escape, nobody escaped, it was just a part of that time. Everybody was snorting cocaine, smoking weed, and, man, you're talking about wild, man, it was just whooo, I can't even begin to tell you how it was, getting through that era. Looking back now, it's frightening. It's such a dangerous way to go about things. I'm thankful to God I even made it through that period and still have my sanity and am physically able to do what I've always done… a lot of guys became prostitutes for that kind of lifestyle."

"A lot of people say that Larry and Johnny pimped and dealt drugs," said Bobby Womack, adding another side to the story. "But I'm gonna say the truth on that. When I was with those guys they never showed any signs of that. Pimping is a full-time job. Every time you turn around you've got to go get your girls out of jail. Why do all that if you can just sing, write a song and fly with the wind?"

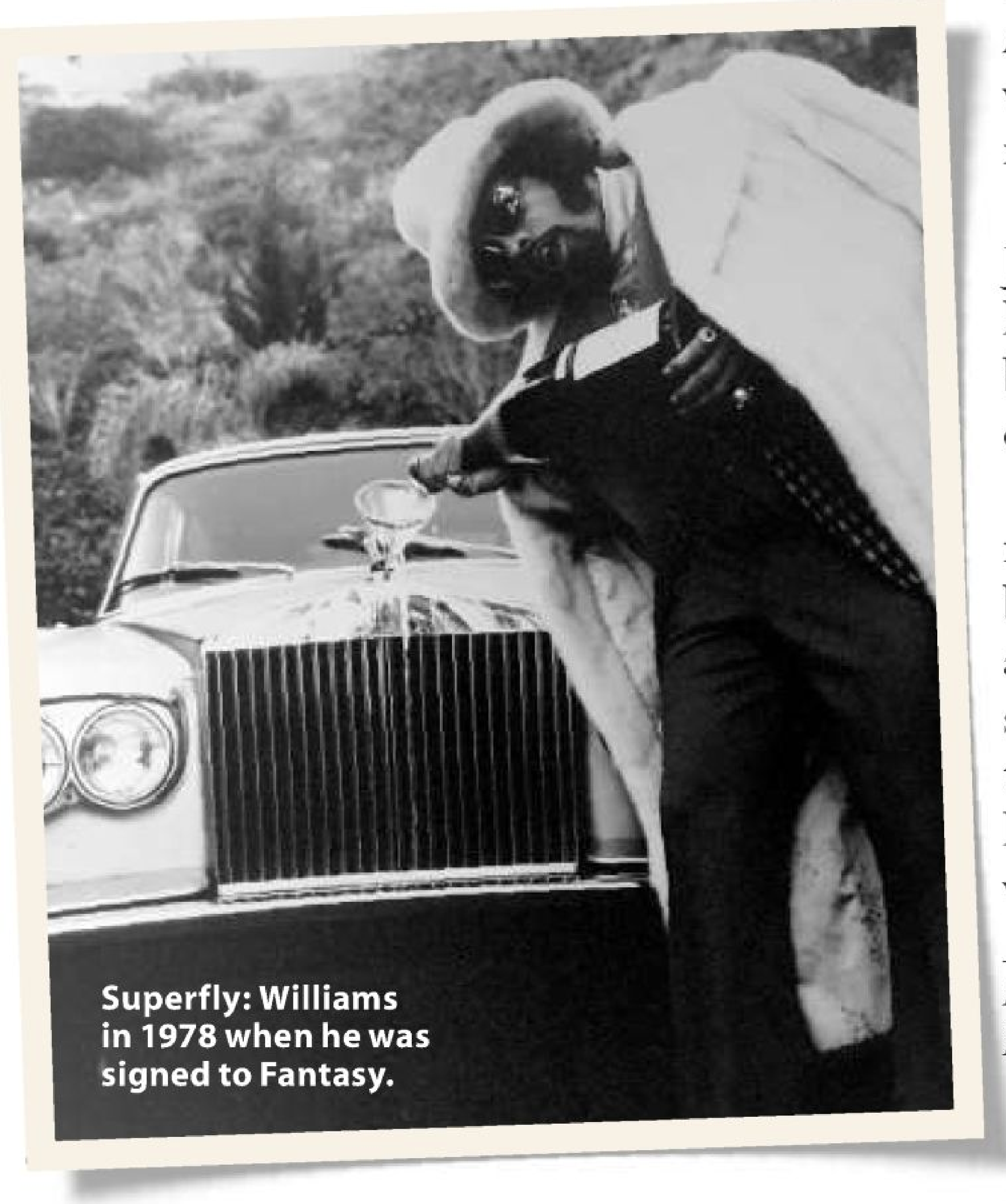
Musicians and hookers have inhabited the same night-time half-world of bars and clubs, and shared a similar laissez faire attitude to sex and drugs, since time immemorial. Male musicians, traditionally without money, have always been attracted to women with what might be described as a steady income. The stereotype of the flamboyant pimp, with the ride, the threads, and the trademark hat, is almost as common in rock'n'roll as it is in film and TV, but Williams pushed the pimp-crime-rock'n'roll envelope further than most.

Not content with merely pimping, Larry was apparently also a ruthless dope dealer and accomplished thief. Again, Etta James didn't mince words: "Larry Williams was one of the best second-storey men I'd ever known. He was a cat burglar. He was famous for being able to scale a wall – any wall – sneak in and out of a house or office in nothing flat."

Little Richard paints an even darker picture of Williams the dope dealer. In the '70s Richard had hit the point where drugs threatened to take over his life. He was drinking heavily and smoking a cocktail of marijuana and PCP; he was speedballing cocaine and heroin, spending up to a thousand dollars a day on dope and constantly having dangerous run-ins with dealers he hadn't paid.

In his autobiography, The Life And Times Of Little Richard, co-written with Charles White, Richard explains that one of his regular suppliers – and seemingly one of the most dangerous – was his previous labelmate, Larry Williams. "Larry came to my house with a gun to shoot me. I'd got some cocaine from him, arranged to pay later, and didn't show up – because I was high. That was probably the most fearful moment of my life. He said, 'Richard, I'm gonna kill you. Ain't no one gonna mess around with my money.' I knew he loved me – I hoped he did! But he had this pistol right there and he would have shot me if I hadn't paid him."

"Little Richard and Larry?" says Herb Hardesty, "File that under 'unbelievable'. I never saw him into dope or any other rackets. I don't think anyone should criticise a man 'less they know what they're talking about. Why put a person in mud? Why put their face in mud? I have nothing to say against him. He was making people happy."



Superfly: Williams in 1978 when he was signed to Fantasy.

Kim Fowley, a precocious kid obsessed by rock'n'roll, hung round the Specialty office on Sunset Boulevard and was befriended by Sonny Bono. Although he had the title of A&R man, Bono also stocked and unloaded the records, but he took time out to play the young Kim Fowley an acetate of She Said Yeah, the song he'd co-written with Larry Williams.

Fowley put a more charitable spin on Larry's criminal career. Once again it seems to have been a matter of money. Fowley suggested that Larry Williams was short-changed from the get-go, and that the move to pimping and dealing was all but inevitable. "I don't think he had any publishing," Fowley said. "There really weren't any album sales back then. So even if he was getting royalties, there wouldn't have been enough records sold on singles, songwriting and publishing income, or artist income, to give him that Beverly Hills, Ice-T kind of nudge.

"In those days, you did whatever you had to do to feed everybody. 'Baby need new shoes.' It could be anything which white folks might look down at. Players are players."

LARRY NEVER SEEMED TO LEARN THE BASIC STREET maxim: "the lower the profile, the longer the life". That 1960 bust didn't seem to slow him down at all. Chris Darrow paints a picture of Larry and Johnny 'Guitar' Watson that resembles something out of a Ralph Bakshi cartoon, with "both of them dressed in matching suits, with matching cars, matching hats with chicks on their arms. They showed up and we smelled Hai Karate."

As the '60s turned into the '70s, however, Williams seems to have become increasingly disturbed, one moment together and rational, the next a raving maniac with a hair-trigger temper.

Bobby Womack: "Larry would get so high that he would always be paranoid. One time when we were hanging out at his house, he was constantly telling me to look out of the window. He said, 'Do you see all them policemen out there?' But it was in the daytime and I wasn't high so I said, Man, I don't see anybody. He got mad and pulled a .357 Magnum, pointed it at my temple and said, 'Look again.' So I said, Oh yeah, Larry, they're all over the place. After that he told me, 'Don't come back by here, man.'"

By January 1980, when the fatal shot was fired, Larry Williams was so far on the outs with the music industry that his demise wasn't even reported in The Los Angeles Times. The police reports are almost as silent: it was filed under 'death by self-inflicted gunshot', and that was all they wrote.

Etta James had her doubts about the police report. "It could have been murder," she said. "We'll never know." She knew Larry was depressed, but she also knew he was freebasing and prone to violent mood swings, and that he had "slapped around a dangerous rocker with connections to the Mob".

"There were rumours that it wasn't suicide," said Bobby Womack. "But the doors were locked from the inside when they found him. Maybe it was professional hit. Anything is possible in the music business when someone talks as loud as Larry and names names like he did."

Etta James and others believed that Johnny Watson had the inside track on how Larry died, that he may even have been a witness, but poor Johnny's now dead and that's that.

Larry Williams the rocker may have missed the big time, and died at just 44, but Larry Williams the player lived the life a hell of a lot longer than most. His high style and high rolling survived through three heavy decades, with just one relatively short stretch inside, before that bullet with his name on finally got him.

Extra interview material by Harvey Kubernik;
Bobby Womack interview by Chris Dell'Olio.

NEARLY 50 YEARS AFTER ITS STRANGE CREATION, VAN MORRISON'S ASTRAL WEEKS STILL REFUSES TO GIVE UP ITS SECRETS.

BEYOND • REASON

GREIL MARCUS MARVELS AT THE SHEER DEPTH OF LIFE HIDDEN IN THE GROOVES.

STEREO
VAN
CKS
CYPRUS
AVENUE
NEW YORK
PaNik

Floating in space: Van performing on a promo cruise on the Hudson River, New York, '67.

FROM THE SIGHTLINES IN BERKELEY, California, where I lived then and live now, I recall 1968 as a year of horror and bad faith, fervour and despair. History was being made in the instant. These names made history in 1968: John Carlos, Bob Beamon, Tommie Smith. They were shouted around the world. Which still echo, which is barely a name at all?

With the Vietnam War all but rolling back across the Pacific to poison the United States itself, it was as if people turned to spectacular lies and glamorous trivialities to hide from themselves the fact that their imaginations had turned to ice. Truly enormous events taking place elsewhere did not travel. Word of Prague Spring, even the meaning of the Soviet invasion that crushed it, arrived only in fragments, and no speaker stood up to put the pieces together. News of the massacre of hundreds of students in Mexico City, just before the Olympic Games were to begin there, was suppressed.

STEREO
VAN MORRISON ASTRAL WEEKS
W
1768

But in the United States few if any looked; curiosity about the world withered. So the games went on as planned – except for John Carlos and Tommie Smith of San Jose State in California, American entrants in the 200 metres. Inspired by Harry Edwards's Olympic Project For Human Rights, which had originally called for a boycott of the Olympics by all black athletes, they had a plan. They would run the race; they would win; they would mount the victory stand; and then, as the band played The Star-Spangled Banner, they would bow their heads and raise black-gloved fists in salutes of black power and black unity.

This event has never been forgotten. Carlos and Smith were treated as terrorists, as if their fists were guns and they had fired them. They were expelled from their team, sent home, and covered in obloquy. On October 18, two days after Smith and Carlos were removed from the games, the American long-jumper Bob Beamon launched himself. He had never jumped farther than 27 feet and four inches; he would never again jump farther than 26 feet 11-and-three-quarter inches. But this day, when he landed, he had travelled 29 feet two-and-a-half inches through the air. From 1935 to 1968 the world record in the long jump had increased by eight-and-a-half inches; this day Bob Beamon broke the world record by almost two feet. When he saw his mark on the scoreboard, he fell to his knees and covered his face in shock. It was an act for which there are no parallels and no metaphors.

[redacted]

"30 SECONDS INTO IT MY WHOLE BEING WAS VIBRATING. I HAD TO BE THE ONE TO DO IT."

PRODUCER LEWIS MERENSTEIN

AS I HEAR IT NOW, AND AS I THINK I heard it then, *Astral Weeks*, recorded in three days in September and October 1968 in New York City, and released on the Warner Bros/Seven Arts label in November, caught the same spirit. In historical terms it didn't make sense. It didn't, in the small-minded way art and politics are so often linked, reflect the great events of the day, any more than Bob Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* did. *John Wesley Harding* might have been a testament that, as Jon Landau put it in 1968, "Dylan has felt the war," but in its lack of hurry, its refusal even to acknowledge that the person whose name was on the cover had ever done anything before, it like *Astral Weeks* refused to speak the language of the time, and in the way that the time has been rewritten into a single rotting cliché of VIETNAM STUDENT RIOTS LBJ LSD SEXUAL REVOLUTION BLACK POWER NIXON neither *John Wesley Harding* nor *Astral Weeks* can be translated into that language.

If *Astral Weeks* caught the spirit of Bob Beamon's event, then it also partook of it. As I understand history, Bob Beamon's jump would not have happened as it did if the skies had been different that day in Mexico City, if he had received a call from his wife that morning, or a different call than he did, or if that day's paper that morning had carried a different story, and the same must have been true when the producer Lewis Merenstein brought Van Morrison into a studio with a few New York City jazzmen: bassist Richard Davis, drummer Connie Kay, guitarist Jay Berliner, percussionist and vibraphonist Warren Smith, Jr, and flautist and soprano saxophonist John Payne.

The music that resulted wasn't jazz. It wasn't blues. It wasn't rock'n'roll in any ordinary or hyphenated manner, but it fit perfectly on the radio in between Jimi Hendrix's Little Wing or Otis Redding's Try A Little Tenderness. It was closer to folk music, and closer to Barbara Allen or the Irish ballad Raglan Road than We Shall Overcome or even Goodnight Irene.

Merenstein had received a call from Warner Bros: we've signed Van Morrison, go up to Boston, see what he's got. Pretty much all anybody knew, and all anybody wanted, was Brown-Eyed Girl from *Blowin' Your Mind!* which my friend Barry Franklin described at the time as "two minutes and 26 seconds of Sweet Pea and 32 minutes of T. B. Sheets". Morrison played Merenstein his song Astral Weeks: "30 seconds into it," Merenstein told Hank Shteamer in 2009, "my whole being was vibrating." And the moment could not have been any different, Merenstein said. "Something as timeless as 40 years had to happen because it had to happen. I had to be the one to do it. Not that producer, not that producer, regardless of their accomplishments. It had to be Richard, not that bass player. I don't want to sound existential, but there was Van, and that was it; there was no band… there were no arrangements… the direction was him singing and playing – that was where I followed. That's why it came out the way it did. If I would've gone somewhere else, it wouldn't have come out the way it did. So there obviously was a direction from somewhere in the sky."

"This is not an exaggeration, this is not just trying to be poetic," Brooks Arthur, the recording engineer for *Astral Weeks*, said in 2009. "A cloud came along, and it was ➢

Getty

≺ called the Van Morrison sessions. We all hopped upon that cloud, and the cloud took us away for a while, and we made this album, and we landed when it was done."

They recorded live, Morrison saying nothing to the musicians in terms of banter or instruction, and saying everything in the cues of his chords, hesitations, lunges, silences, and in those moments when he loosed himself from words and floated on his own air. But that's too simple. When you listen, you hear the musicians talking to each other; more than that, you hear them hearing each other.

In the first notes of Sweet Thing, Morrison opens the tune with his acoustic guitar; as soon as a listener has something to grab onto, Richard Davis re-states Morrison's theme, with the barest increase in force that makes all the difference. Davis was born in Chicago; he was a veteran of sessions with Eric Dolphy and Roland Kirk. This day it's as if Davis is sweeping into the song to dance Morrison even farther into it – into *Astral Weeks*' great swirl.

Someone other than Morrison is now leading the listener into the bower of the song, a hillside where you can tumble down like Jim and little Sabine in Jules Et Jim; that gives Morrison the freedom to forget the shape of the song, what it needs, what it wants, and trust himself. He'll sing the song; someone else will play it.

After the sessions were finished, Merenstein, with Morrison and the conductor Larry Fallon consulting, overdubbed strings and horn parts. Sometimes the songs are unimaginable without them, and the added sounds so layered into the original instruments as to be part of them, as on Sweet Thing; sometimes they're gratuitous, especially the strings on Cyprus Avenue and the gypsy violin on Madame George, but after all this time they tune themselves out.

When the music is at its most contingent – when Merenstein's argument about how the record might never have happened at all becomes an awareness that the fate of a song, whether or not it will achieve the finality you in fact know it will, rests on the way Richard Davis steps out of a rest and whether or not Morrison will know what Davis has just done and what he himself can now do to live up to it – it's scary, because the inevitability of the music is also its unlikeliness.

Early on, there's a rupture in Sweet Thing when Morrison hollers – a long, happy hoyyyyyyyy, the singer shot out of the cannon of his own breath – and the scene the sound makes is so complete, the musicians around Morrison filling in the "gardens all wet with rain" he's already described, that you realise no one has to go back to the song at all. Near the end of Madame George – almost two minutes from its actual end, but at the end of the song as a written piece, a story told in lines and verses, one after the other – there's a pause, and then, at seven minutes 34 seconds, a single thick, weighted bass note from Davis that is as final a sound as any song could hold without dropping dead on the spot. The story is over, the note says; everything that is going to happen has happened; everyone has been left behind; everyone is dead, and all that remains is looking back.

Every note he plays after that last one is sweeping up, closing the windows, locking the door. At this point the song is as much his as Morrison's; both have their own ideas about what it's for, what it's about, who Madame George is, and why anyone should care: why in their different ways they are going to make you care. At its highest pitch, the album has become a collaboration between Morrison and Davis, or a kind of conspiracy, one that takes advantage of the producer and the other musicians but excludes them from the real conversation – excludes them, but somehow not the listener. In the blues term for the shadow self that knows what the self refuses to know, here Davis is Morrison's "second mind"; there Morrison is Davis's. You are listening in, but you can never be sure you heard what you thought you heard.

There is death all over the music – an acceptance of death. Save for one couplet, the last words on the album are a farewell, in the form of a closing door: "I know you're dying – and I know you know it too." Davis rattles the door in its frame. But usually death is not so close. It's something you see in someone's face, maybe years off, but already looming.

You freeze up – or you realise you have no time to waste. You begin asking what it is you really want. In the title song the singer asks to be born again – "There you go," he says to himself in the mirror, or to the person who he expects will save him, "talking to Huddie Ledbetter". Lead Belly died in 1949, almost 20 years before, only four years after the person singing was born, but he's here now, and he'll answer you if you know how to ask. And for a moment you do. "Would you, kiss my eyes" – what a surrender of body and soul are in those lines! It's an opening into what Lester Bangs called the "mystical awe that cut right through the heart of the work".

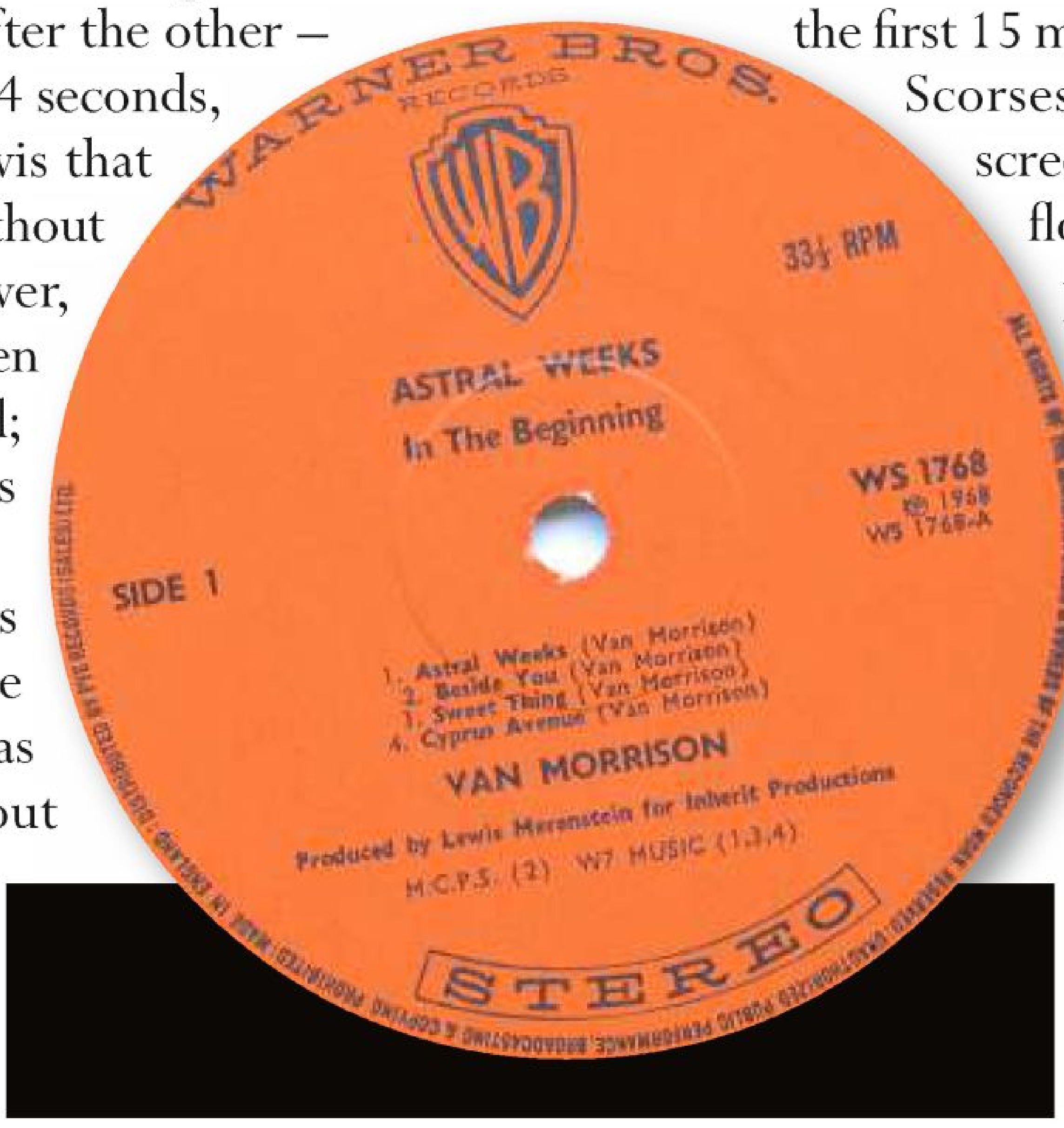
When Lewis Merenstein says the album "had to happen because it had to happen", that "if I would've gone somewhere else", not to Boston that day, the album "wouldn't have come out the way it did", or even taken any shape at all, he is situating the album as an event: a unique and timeless act or occurrence, like Bob Beamon's jump, something that could not have been predicted and could never be repeated.

But that is only half of it. In Astral Weeks, Sweet Thing, Cyprus Avenue, Madame George, Ballerina and Slim Slow Slider there are everywhere in the music itself tiny events that are just as contingent; that single hoyyyyyyyy may be only the most immediately thrilling. These events take place in the breaks and holes in the music. They change what could have been a spot of dead air into a moment of anticipation. They turn the singer's claims into truth, the singer testing that truth with repetitions of a phrase until, now an incantation, not description, the phrase may have sloughed off all ordinary meaning and acquired one without intent or desire.

It's the nearly countless "goodbye"s at the end of Madame George no longer necessarily signifying "fare thee well" or "I must take my leave" or "I'll never see you again" but "I'm returning", "I could never leave", "I will never forget you."

It's this sense of event within a song, a verse, a line, or even what might occur in the space between one word and another, that raises the cast of drama that hovers over the whole of the album. "I based the first 15 minutes of Taxi Driver on *Astral Weeks*," Martin Scorsese said in 1978, just after the first major screening of his film The Last Waltz, sitting on the floor in his living room in the Hollywood Hills, playing the album, hearing Madame George come up. "That's the song," he said – as in the moment Bernard Herrmann's theme for Taxi Driver played from inside of Madame George, as I Cover The Waterfront played inside of that, and you could follow Travis Bickle, driving his hack from 6pm to 6am every night, talking to himself, "All the animals come out at night, whores, skunk pussies, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies, sick, venal," as he drives under the spray of a broken hydrant and wishes for a rain that would wash all the sin off the streets, as he tries to talk up the ticket seller in a porn theatre, as he sees his dream girl, describing her in his diary in words that could have come from Sweet Thing: "She was wearing a white dress/She appeared like an angel/Out of this filthy mess."

It's all foreshadowing, as on *Astral Weeks* almost everything is memory, but the sense of tension is the same. Accompanying ➢


WARNER BROS. RECORDS
33⅓ RPM
ASTRAL WEEKS
In The Beginning
WS 1768
℗ 1968
WS 1768-A
SIDE 1
1. Astral Weeks (Van Morrison)
2. Beside You (Van Morrison)
3. Sweet Thing (Van Morrison)
4. Cyprus Avenue (Van Morrison)
VAN MORRISON
Produced by Lewis Merenstein for Inherit Productions
M.C.P.S. (2) W7 MUSIC (1,3,4)
STEREO

"I BASED THE FIRST 15 MINUTES OF TAXI DRIVER ON *ASTRAL WEEKS.*"

MARTIN SCORSESE, 1978

Weekender: upright bass player Tom Kielbania with Morrison at a Warner Bros party, the Scene Club, New York, January 27, 1969.

Getty

VAN MORRISON
WARNER BROS. SEVEN ARTS RECORDS LTD.

every shout of exaltation on *Astral Weeks*, every breath of comfort, there is a murmur of jeopardy and danger that makes you afraid for the people in the songs – afraid for Madame George, afraid for the singer who leaves her behind as if she's already dead, afraid that the singer so transformed by his self-raised spectre of rebirth may not make it as far as, on the first track on *Astral Weeks*, its title song, he actually does. It's this that over the years has led so many people to take the album as a kind of talisman, to recognise others by their affection for it, to say, "I'm going to my grave with this record, I will never forget it."

"TO THIS DAY IT GIVES ME PAIN TO HEAR IT," LEWIS Merenstein said in 2009 of the record he produced, then pulling away from what he'd just said: "Pain is the wrong word – I'm so moved by it." But pain is exactly the right word: the pain, the fear, of knowing that to acknowledge that the music exists at all is to acknowledge that, because it might not have, it doesn't.

What lessons can it teach, what last words might it leave on anyone's lips? What does it say, where did it come from? In 2009, as Morrison was setting out to re-create *Astral Weeks* on stages around the world, with charts indicating every half-note, every caesura, every skipped beat, so that Jay Berliner and Richard Davis (who finally bowed out) could replay their parts exactly as they had more than 40 years before, I was asked these questions, and I realised I didn't care.

What happens on *Astral Weeks* beggars those questions. It was 46 minutes in which the possibilities of the medium – of rock'n'roll, of pop music, of what you might call music that could be played on the radio as if it were both timeless and news – were realised, when you went out to the limits of what this form could do. You went past them: you showed everybody else that the limits they had accepted on invention, expression, honesty, daring, were false. You said it to musicians and you said it to people who weren't musicians: there's more to life than you thought. Life can be lived more deeply – with a greater sense of fear and horror and desire than you ever imagined.

That's what I heard at the time, and that's what I hear now. There is a difference. I no longer altogether trust the sort of explanations that along with other people I used to pursue so passionately – not, of course, philistine, literal explanations, but imaginative, contextualising explanations that made both a work and its setting richer for the introduction of the one to the other.

I've played *Astral Weeks* more than I've played any other record. In the face of work that became part of my life a long time ago and remains inseparable from it, whether it's The Great Gatsby or *Astral Weeks*, what I value most is how inexplicable any great work really is.

Greil Marcus is the author of Listening To Van Morrison (Faber).

Until it's time to go

A quiet girl from Wimbledon became the leading light of the UK folk scene, wrote some of our greatest folk songs and led Fairport Convention through their most potent years. Jim Irvin traces the unsteady rise and the sudden, cruel demise of...

Sandy Denny

Phil Smee

In a lonely moment: Sandy in 1967; "Hers was the best voice I'd ever heard," says The Strawbs' Dave Cousins.

Louder and brighter: performing with Fairport Convention for Danish TV, Copenhagen, 1969.

ON THE AFTERNOON OF MONDAY, APRIL 18, 1978, a young London-based musician named Jon Cole left his flat in Barnes, climbed into his Datsun Cherry and set off for Hammersmith where his band, The Movies, were rehearsing.

He turned the corner into the long road where his friend – a teacher named Miranda Ward – lived in a first-floor flat. The previous evening, Miranda had given him a spare key and asked if, while she was working, he would look in on the woman who was staying with her. The woman's husband had just run off, taking their baby daughter with him. Miranda thought it would be nice if someone kept an eye on her and checked to see if she needed anything. But Jon couldn't be bothered; he was already late for his rehearsal. Then something changed his mind.

As his car drew level with the bus stop outside 93 Castlenau, he heard a woman's voice whisper a single word in his ear: "Help."

He wasn't a man prone to hearing voices – and he hasn't heard any since – so he paid attention to the command in his head, pulled into the drive and opened the door to Miranda's flat. Miranda's friend was upstairs on the landing. She was dressed in bell-bottomed jeans and a pink mohair sweater. She was stretched out on her side, feet touching the bottom of the steep set of stairs which curved up to the next floor. She was motionless.

Jon checked her breathing. She was alive. He called an ambulance and was told it would be there in five minutes. In the meantime, he went into the kitchen to make some tea. He was calm. He felt sure the woman would be fine, that she'd just fallen and knocked herself out. He even called to her from the kitchen: "Do you want a cup of tea, Sandy?"

Somehow, this young woman from Wimbledon sails into a studio in Barnes and harvests history's echoes.

CHURCH ROAD, BARNES, NINE years earlier. On a fair, crisp Sunday afternoon in February 1969, a young band working on their third album are waiting for their singer to turn up.

Ashley 'Tyger' Hutchings, founder member of the group and keen to push them further towards folk, is tuning his bass. Guest fiddler Dave Swarbrick has been here with engineer John Wood since the previous afternoon, testing pick-ups on his violin so he can hear himself above the guitars of Richard Thompson and Simon Nicol. They set up in a semi-circle flanking boyish drummer Martin Lamble. Out in the control room, next to Wood, sits producer Joe Boyd, an American mogul in London. He's the man behind Witchseason Productions, which manages and records Fairport Convention, The Incredible String Band, John Martyn and Nick Drake. He's engrossed in the baseball pages of a New York Times. The atmosphere is relaxed but industrious. Then Sandy arrives.

Short, full-figured and rosy-cheeked, with a cloud of fine, fair hair tumbling over her shoulders, 22-year-old Sandy Denny resembles the archetypal English farm girl in her floral smock-dress. Her speaking voice is normally hearty, but today (not for the first time) she's seeking sympathy and monopolising attention. She's woken up with a terrible cold and is afraid her voice won't hold out for more than one take, though this doesn't stop her lighting up another Embassy.

They're attempting the English folk song, A Sailor's Life, a traditional air Sandy learnt from Martin Carthy while touring folk clubs as a solo singer. Aware that this epic song won't retain its tension over too many takes, they all know this has to be the one.

Somehow, this young woman from Wimbledon, streaming cold and all, sails from her soundproofed box in the middle of Barnes and harvests history's echoes. Her voice is river-clear, evoking a siren's magnetic music and the lament of Polly on the shore; now delicate, now robust, it summons longing and departure. It's sultry and sad and deep as the sea. And when it glides away, Richard's guitar breaks over the song like a giant wave, Swarb's violin both a ghostly hornpipe and a lightning bolt. Swaying like a storm-tossed galleon, it's a dynamic tour-de-force: an unrepeatable take of 11 minutes and 11 seconds.

When it's over, Boyd and Wood are grinning. Everyone knows they've been present at the birth of something definitive.

NEIL AND EDNA DENNY FELL IN love in Babbacombe, Devon at the RAF's Number One Training Wing. He was a navigator, she was in postings. They wed in 1942, honeymooning that Christmas. Their son, David, was born in January 1945. Their daughter, Alexandra Elene MacLean Denny, was born on January 6, 1947 in Worple Road, Wimbledon. She would forever be known as Sandy.

Neil and Edna were loving, if traditional, parents who expected their children to ➢

do well at school and encouraged them to play instruments. Sandy was a natural at the piano, able to play set pieces from memory. Yet she developed a deep mistrust of teachers, possibly, says her father, after one of them punished her for being so relentlessly good. Fiercely loyal to friends, she irritated her headmistress by always taking the blame for errant classmates.

At home, Neil Denny loved settling down by the gramophone with his large collection of classical music, Gilbert and Sullivan, the traditional songs of his Scottish heritage, Fats Waller and The Ink Spots. When the '60s arrived, the family kept abreast of pop, though the teenage Sandy ignored her father's protests about Bob Dylan's "horrible, grating voice". She was fascinated by Dylan's words and how he phrased them, and she was moved to pick up her brother's guitar.

Forced to drop music after a dispute with the teacher, she passed her art A-level and won a scholarship to Kingston School Of Art. But her parents had more traditional ambitions for their daughter, so she left grammar school a term early and took some casual nursing work at the Brompton Chest Hospital in Fulham. She hated it. She found caring for the sick too stressful and came to dread walking through the subterranean corridor that led past the mortuary. Working in a chest hospital didn't stop her smoking, either. "I needed to smoke to steady my nerves," she later recalled.

In the autumn of 1965, shortly after taking up her college place, Sandy visited the Barge, a floating folk club moored by the Thames in Kingston. She came away convinced she could sing better than anyone on the bill. The next week, she plucked up courage and returned to the club with her guitar. "My mouth went dry and I could hardly sing," she recalled some years later, "but when I came off and everybody applauded I knew I'd always want to do it."

STAGE FRIGHT NEVER LEFT HER. NEVERTHELESS, SHE started singing regularly at folk venues like Bunjies coffee bar, Les Cousins and the John Snow. Fellow folk-scene debutante Philippa Clare recalls that back then "if you had three chords and long hair you were a folk singer". Although Sandy's repertoire was limited – Tom Paxton and Pete Seeger songs and a few stand-bys concerning trains and hobos – her warm, sparkling voice set her apart from the ranks of Joan Baez and Julie Felix impersonators.

Soon an agent named Sandy Glennon was booking her for £15 a night and Sandy quit her foundation course to devote herself to singing. By 1966, she noted later, the folk boom crowd was jaded and some of the performers were set in their ways; but others welcomed the gifted newcomer. American singer-songwriter Jackson C. Frank lived in a South Kensington house with his compatriot Paul Simon and British singer Al Stewart. Frank had a reputation as the intense young beatnik about town. He and Sandy began dating.

It was a tough initiation in love. Sandy adored the truculent Frank and his songs – which she began including in her sets – but he was demanding and had aggressive moods (he was later treated for schizophrenia). When he started taking hard drugs, the relationship fizzled, but Sandy continued to sing his songs Blues Run The Game and – perhaps aware of the irony – You Never Wanted Me.

mono
JACKSON C. FRANK
sandy & johnny

During a residency at the Deane Arms in South Ruislip she met folk stalwarts Alex Campbell and John Renbourn. In November 1966, Campbell invited Sandy to join him on a session for the BBC World Service show, A Cellarful Of Folk, where she sang Green Grow The Laurels. The connection led, early the following year, to her first recordings, singing on a session divided between two albums: *Alex Campbell & Friends* and *Sandy & Johnny* with the Johnny Silvo Folk Group. Her solo debut was the traditional song The False Bride, Campbell introducing her as "a new young singer who has something to say".

As she bonded with such road-hardened players, the new young singer discovered a taste for the folk scene's other favourite pursuit. Sandy learnt to drink.

It was a rare time to be in London. At the Troubadour, a coffee bar at 263 Old Brompton Road (still there today, still dripping with atmosphere), folk's finest would pull up a stool and perform – even Bob Dylan on one occasion. One regular was Dave Cousins, leader of a trio from Twickenham, The Strawbs.

"I dropped in at the singers' night one Tuesday," he remembers. "Suddenly, there was the best voice I'd ever heard." Perched on a stool, sporting a white dress and a white straw hat, and strumming her old Gibson acoustic, was Sandy. Dave introduced himself and, on a whim, asked if she'd join his band. "Much to my astonishment she said yes."

SOON AFTER, SANDY WITNESSED THE NEWLY FORMED Pentangle, an ambitious blend of folk and jazz featuring John Renbourn, Bert Jansch, singer Jacqui McShee and, on double bass, Danny Thompson, sidekick of Tubby Hayes and Ronnie Scott. Sandy, who'd always been a jazz fan, approached Danny after their show at The Horseshoe in Tottenham Court Road and asked if he'd help her with her piano playing. "I said, I'm not a teacher," recalls Danny, "but I fell for her immediately. She had an amazing chuckle. She was larger than life, a great bird to be with."

Danny lived in Wimbledon, too, so duly went round to Worple Road. Sandy's mother was none too impressed with the Cockney jazzer. "Her mum worked for the local tax office," laughs Danny. "Sandy met me one night and said, 'Here, my mum's checked up on you and found out you're married with a son!' Sandy knew, she didn't care."

Their 18-month affair was all you might imagine between off-duty musicians in '60s London. Danny made good money and drove a Bentley, so they'd travel around the country together whenever their schedules coincided. "She was always up for a laugh," says Danny. "She'd let stuff happen and wouldn't stand for any pomposity. She did all the things a singer wasn't supposed to. I used to nag her about the smoking, but I wouldn't have stopped her drinking – we were all big drinkers. I did try and keep her off the brandy. She got aggressive on brandy."

'Sandy on the brandy' became a familiar sight in London's nightspots. The maitre d' at the Speakeasy, Mario, kept a bottle behind the bar for her. She was a life-force, always dragging her friends out of bed to dance the night away, paying for cabs, sending them off for a good time.

"Everyone – men, women, cats and dogs – fell in love with Sandy," says Linda Thompson, who first met her in the summer of 1967. Down at the UFO club Sandy got chatting with one of its prime movers, a handsome 24-year-old Bostonian who'd developed a love for English music: Joe Boyd.

She invited him to see her at Les Cousins. Boyd recalls thinking her performance was too much in the modern singer-songwriter vein, "the cheesier end of folk". But he couldn't ignore that voice. A few days later in the street he ran into Sandy with a test-pressing of the album she'd recorded in Copenhagen with The Strawbs. Joe invited her to his flat so they could listen to it.

"On-stage she'd seemed a bit silly, giggling all the time," says Boyd. "Once I'd listened to the record my whole perception of her changed. She was incredibly funny, with a very quick mind, jumping from one

> "She was incredibly funny, with a very quick mind – a chaotic intelligence just poured out."
>
> Joe Boyd

Girl from South London: Sandy in '66 – she was moved to pick up her brother's guitar by Dylan's songs.

subject to another, dropping in comments obliquely, interrupting herself with footnotes – a chaotic intelligence just poured out." They ended the evening listening to an illicit broadcast of the yet-to-be-released *Sgt. Pepper* and began a short romance.

Linda Thompson remembers the social whirl of those days. "I first met Sandy at the Troubadour. She was with Joe Boyd drinking and being jolly. I'd heard about her before: she'd gone out with a guy I was involved with, Paul McNeal, who was a great trad singer – we were touring folk clubs together with Tim Hardin, everywhere from the Bootle Hard Of Hearing Club to some dive in Essex. I was living in a house in Holland Park with my cousin, a model who was going out with Tim Buckley. Then later I started going out with Joe."

THE BUZZ ABOUT SANDY WAS GROWING. SHE'D BEEN headlining at The Troubadour since December 1966, covered several times in Melody Maker's folk pages by writer Karl Dallas, had appeared on Alex Campbell's My Kinda Folk TV show and played a major anti-Vietnam benefit in Rotterdam.

"She was the best solo female folk singer in the country," recalls folk singer Marc Ellington. "There were some very good traditional singers like The Watersons; there were a lot of guys writing modern material, but Sandy was the only one who could go from She Moved Through The Fair onto something by Bob Dylan with complete ease and make everything her own."

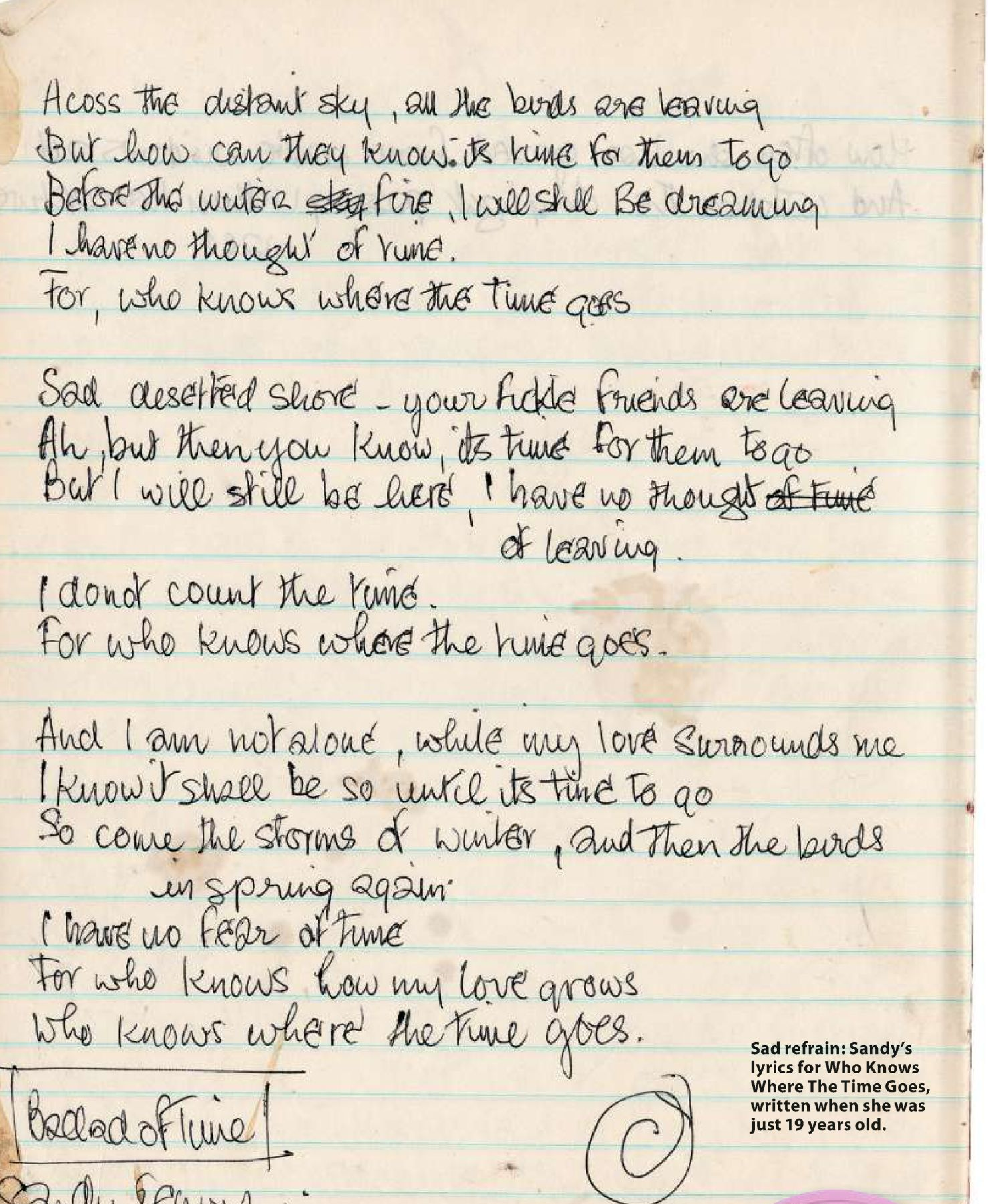
One might assume it was Joe Boyd who asked Sandy to join Fairport Convention, the young band from Muswell Hill he'd seen in the Happening 44 strip club and begun managing soon after he met her. In fact, Joe was in America when they needed to find a replacement for departing singer Judy Dyble. "We'd heard about Sandy," says Richard Thompson, "and read about her in the Melody Maker, so we asked her along."

The auditions took place in a Fulham boys' club in May 1968. "We saw 10 girls over two days and it was a bit disheartening," says Simon Nicol, still part of Fairport today. "But when Sandy came in, the room got louder and brighter. We were very young and I was aware of being in the presence of someone older and wiser."

"She made us audition for her, to see if she wanted to join us," laughs Richard Thompson, 18 at the time. "We played The Hobo by Tim Buckley and she did You Never Wanted Me. She was incredible. We went into a three-second scrum and said, Right she's in! The music suddenly leapt up 100 per cent. She was such a classy singer, it made the rest of us sound much better."

One of the lads, Sandy was quite at home on the road, on the stage and in the pub afterwards. Indeed, Joe Boyd has said that when he heard she'd joined he was concerned she might be a corrupting influence on his young charges. "She was more of a hedonist than the rest of us," laughs Simon, "but it would be unfair to call her a corrupting influence." ➢

I will still be dreaming: "She was a mixture of strait-laced schoolteacher and someone who made Janis Joplin look like Mother Teresa," says folk singer Marc Ellington.



Acoss the distant sky, all the birds are leaving
But how can they know. its time for them to go
Before the winter [illegible] fire, I will still be dreaming
I have no thought of time.
For, who knows where the time goes

Sad deserted shore - your fickle friends are leaving
Ah, but then you know, its time for them to go
But I will still be here, I have no thought ~~of time~~
of leaving.

I dont count the time.
For who knows where the time goes.

And I am not alone, while my love surrounds me
I know it shall be so until its time to go
So come the storms of winter, and then the birds
in spring again
I have no fear of time
For who knows how my love grows
Who knows where the time goes.

Ballad of Time

Sandy Denny

Sad refrain: Sandy's lyrics for Who Knows Where The Time Goes, written when she was just 19 years old.

During the long hours of travelling, Sandy would sing Scottish ballads, such as Jock Of Hazeldine, The Seal Woman's Croon and Flowers Of The Forest, which she'd learnt from her father. ("According to legend, that's really what got them intrigued by British traditional music," says Boyd.) Linda remembers that Sandy found touring gruelling. Singing over electric instruments strained her voice at first, and being in male company all day had its downside.

"But she wouldn't put up with the usual shit women put up with, that's for sure," Linda says. "She wouldn't let the boys dominate her. And she could be difficult herself. She could really take over. Then the next minute she'd display a total lack of self-confidence."

"Incredibly low self-esteem," confirms Philippa Clare, "and she could be very defensive. One night down the Speakeasy, Pete Townshend came up and said, 'You're looking nice,' and her immediate reaction was, 'What do you mean!?' She loved Pete, but she never thought people *really* liked her, always that they had some ulterior motive. She was very difficult if you paid her a compliment."

Marc Ellington: "She could be very touchy about her appearance. She'd just look at a plate of cakes and put on weight and she'd either wear jeans that looked like they had the Orson Welles designer label or incredibly old-fashioned '50s dresses. Other days she'd look stunning. She was a mixture of strait-laced schoolteacher and someone who made Janis Joplin look like Mother Teresa, completely out of control. Not within an hour, within the same sentence."

Sandy's mercurial personality was the perfect creative crucible. "She told me, 'I'm going to write some songs,'" recalls Linda. "I said, What do you mean write songs? It's hard to believe, but it never occurred to us to write back then. The next thing I knew we were watching the TV in her attic in Gloucester Road and a butter ad came on, this voice singing, 'We're all a lot better for butter.' And it was Sandy! She said, 'Promise me you won't tell Richard I did this, he'd kill me! But I got £40!' Then she played me Who Knows Where The Time Goes and I was stunned."

In fact, the song, written when Sandy was 19, first appeared on The Strawbs' recording which had so impressed Boyd. Only the second song she'd written, Who Knows Where The Time Goes would, for many fans, remain her best. In Let It Rock magazine in 1974, Clive James proclaimed it, "one of the two or three dozen crucial songs in rock," adding that it "showed the full power – for the one and only time – of the gift its author so unselfconsciously possessed." (Despite James' past tense, Sandy was still alive with some superb work waiting ahead of her.) Whatever, it was certainly the first example of Sandy's remarkable ability to create songs which felt simultaneously ancient and modern, and to sing them in a voice that made the simplest lyrics profound.

Sandy's first Fairport album, *What We Did On Our Holidays*, opened with another of her compositions, Fotheringay. Its melody was taken from an earlier song – possibly her first – Box Full Of Treasures, the new lyrics inspired by a book about Mary, Queen of Scots. With the hymnal Book Song, the bluesy Mr Lacey, covers of Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell, She Moves Through The Fair and Richard's Meet On The Ledge, *Holidays* was a strong record, but clearly the work of a group pulling in several directions.

WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAYS
FAIRPORT CONVENTION
STEREO
island
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Singer Iain Matthews wasn't as taken with folk as the others, and left early in 1969. The new quintet, with Sandy taking most of the leads, was quickly accepted by the fans. "You can always tell when you're on a stage with someone with charisma," says Simon Nicol. "The audience are all looking at the same spot."

WHILE REHEARSING FOR THE FOLLOW-UP TO *Holidays*, the Fairports would drop by Elektra Records and hang out with Eclection, a pioneering electric folk band fronted by the genre's only black singer, Dorris Henderson, and featuring George Kajanus (later of Sailor) and Trevor Lucas, a tall, red-headed, deep-voiced Australian singer. In Britain since 1964, Lucas came with a reputation as a ladies' man who, apart from being a talented musician, was also a master carpenter and superb chef. Garrulous and ambitious, with interests in music beyond the folk scene, he was also severely dyslexic. Lucas met Sandy on the folk circuit and moved into the Gloucester Road house where she rented the attic room. She fell deeply in love with him.

Fairport Convention and Eclection shared a bill at Mothers in Birmingham on May 12, 1969. After the show, Sandy chose to return to London in Trevor's Hillman Hunter. The decision probably saved her life. Fairport's driver fell asleep at the wheel and their Transit van somersaulted off the M1, scattering the band and gear across the motorway. Linda Thompson: "The night after the accident at four in the morning I met Sandy in an all-night supermarket. She was just in a dreadful state saying Martin's dead, and Richard's girlfriend [Jeannie Franklyn] is dead and Tyger's badly injured. She would have been sitting next to Richard if she hadn't gone home with Trevor."

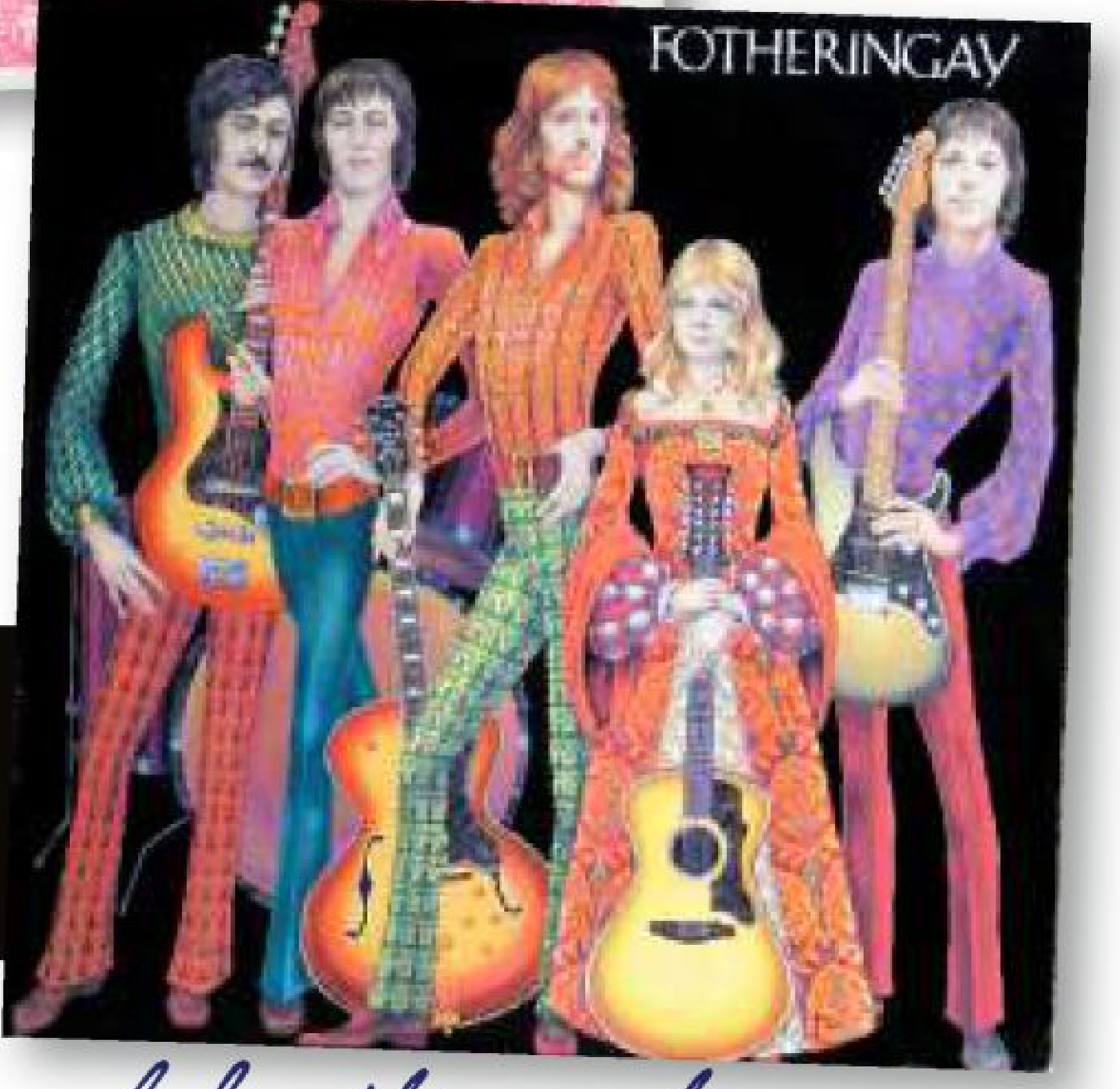
After Lamble's funeral and Ashley's discharge from hospital, a band meeting decided that the old Fairport was finished. They opted to work on a brand new repertoire. Joe Boyd compiled *Unhalfbricking* from the songs completed before the crash, among them Autopsy, one of Sandy's most arcanely compelling songs, set by Richard to an arrangement in 5/8. By the time that Si Tu Dois Partir (a Cajun-flavoured version of Dylan's If You Gotta Go, Go Now) became a surprise Top 30 hit in July 1969, Fairport were beginning to see their new incarnation take shape.

"A few months before the accident, *Music From Big Pink* by The Band hit London," recalls Joe Boyd. "Fairport effectively said, 'We want to create something as English as this is American.' So much of what they'd done up until then was American in style. *Big Pink* kind of said, 'Forget it, you're not American, you're never even gonna come close to understanding this music.' At the same time it was inspiring a real feeling for roots: forget all that middle-class surface stuff. This is the Arkansas earth speaking… So what about the Lincolnshire earth?"

With Swarbrick now full-time on electric violin, they gathered at a house near Winchester. "I was dumbfounded by all of them," recalls the new drummer Dave Mattacks, who'd previously played in dance bands. "I'd never met people like this. They were all very bright and their priorities were different from musicians I'd played with up to that time. Sandy had the most amazing voice. I'd not heard singing that good before."

THE RESULTANT *LIEGE & LIEF* WAS WARMLY WELCOMED. Even the godfather of English folk, A.L. Lloyd, gave the new sound his approval. It remains Fairport's bestseller and has never been out of print. The critics hosanna-ed, America beckoned, and a world tour was arranged. At which point, Sandy left the band.

Liege
& Lief
Fairport
Convention



As Fairport prepared to fly to Copenhagen for a TV show, Sandy announced she wasn't going, saying that she didn't want to fly. The band didn't take her seriously, but she failed to turn up at the airport the next morning. David Sandison, Island's head of press at the time, remembered Witchseason publicist Anthea Joseph taking it upon herself to get Sandy to Denmark. "She did a bit of detective work and finally tracked Sandy down, very drunk and belligerent, sobered her up and frogmarched her onto the next flight. Of course, as soon as she got on the plane Sandy just clicked her fingers and ordered more booze. When they arrived, Sandy was completely drunk again. She could be very selfish."

"We felt let down," says Richard. "But I remember at the airport in Copenhagen saying, 'Well, perhaps this is for the best. Aren't girls temperamental? Let's have a lads' band.' Something like that. It was Sandy's choice. She wanted to spend more time with Trevor."

The couple had set up home in Chipstead Street, Fulham. They were fervent nestbuilders. He would make furniture and cook. She would decorate and sew, and read P.G. Wodehouse to him as they sat up at night in their waterbed. They bought an Airedale terrier and named him Watson. "After the accident, she'd become more domestic, more comfortable," says Joe. "Now the record was out, everybody loved it, all the offers from America were coming in. She looked at it all with new eyes and she wasn't sure that was what she really wanted."

Some friends have suggested that Sandy was more spooked by the accident than she let on. It gave her a glimpse of mortality, and made her consider the future beyond rock music, a trade still rare among young British women at the time. Her insecurity stretched to Trevor too. She fretted about his fidelity, certain that he slept with other women on tour.

"She wouldn't put up with the usual shit women put up with. She wouldn't let the boys dominate her."
Linda Thompson

"She could see a situation developing where she'd spend the next year touring and lose her relationship with Trevor," says Joe. "For the first time in her life she had a settled relationship and she didn't want to give it up."

Another factor in her departure may have been the arrival of Dave Swarbrick. He and Sandy were both natural dominators of the group. They had a deep respect for one another but they also wound each other up. It may have been one big personality too many.

"It was very tricky for her to settle into the discipline of working with other people," says Marc Ellington, who invited Sandy to sing on his own albums. "But she found it very difficult to stand up on her own and was reluctant to go solo. She liked the camaraderie and power of a band and not having to take care of herself."

SANDY'S SOLUTION WAS TO FORM A GROUP WITH Trevor. The music would be on her terms, and she'd have the support of a full band and Trevor where she could keep an eye on him. They gathered former Eclection drummer Gerry Conway, bass player Pat Donaldson and guitarist Jerry Donahue from Poet And The One Man Band. For a few days they were called Tiger's Eye. Then they became Fotheringay.

"I'll never go solo again," Sandy told Disc gleefully in September 1970. "I'm too happy with bunches of people."

"It was pretty much Sandy's show," says Donahue, "but she encouraged all of us. It was the closest I've ever come in music to a family." Fotheringay was so harmonious, Donahue can only recall one argument: between Sandy and Gerry Conway, about a cheese sandwich. Donahue also realised something that Sandy couldn't always see: "To Trevor she was the greatest thing ever. He thought she was very, very special."

In the 1970 Melody Maker Poll, Sandy took the rosette for Best Female Singer, and soon afterwards she recorded the performance most rock fans know her by, Battle Of Evermore, a duet with Robert Plant on *Led Zeppelin IV*.

"I didn't realise until I'd nearly finished the lyrics that it needed to be a call-and-response thing," says Plant. "So I approached Sandy, my favourite singer out of all the British girls that ever were, and she was up for it. She and I got the Melody Maker awards that year, two singers from groups that never got on the radio!"

But while things were looking up for Sandy, others were unhappy about Fotheringay. Joe Boyd had had long discussions with her about going solo after Fairport, and had even secured a $40,000 advance from A&M in America for her next record. He was irked to see the money, which could have given her some security, being frittered away on the band. He was also upset that his vision of a Sandy solo album which fully explored the creative chemistry between her and Richard Thompson was not to be.

Some fans thought Fotheringay a step sideways, too. The album was well received, chiefly for Sandy's singing on tracks like the pellucid Banks Of The Nile, but the response to their first shows was muted. Sandy found the responsibility of being the main attraction a strain. Fotheringay's support act was a young duo, The Humblebums, comprising future stars Gerry Rafferty and Billy Connolly. The latter has recalled Sandy to Philippa Clare as "one of the angriest women I ever met".

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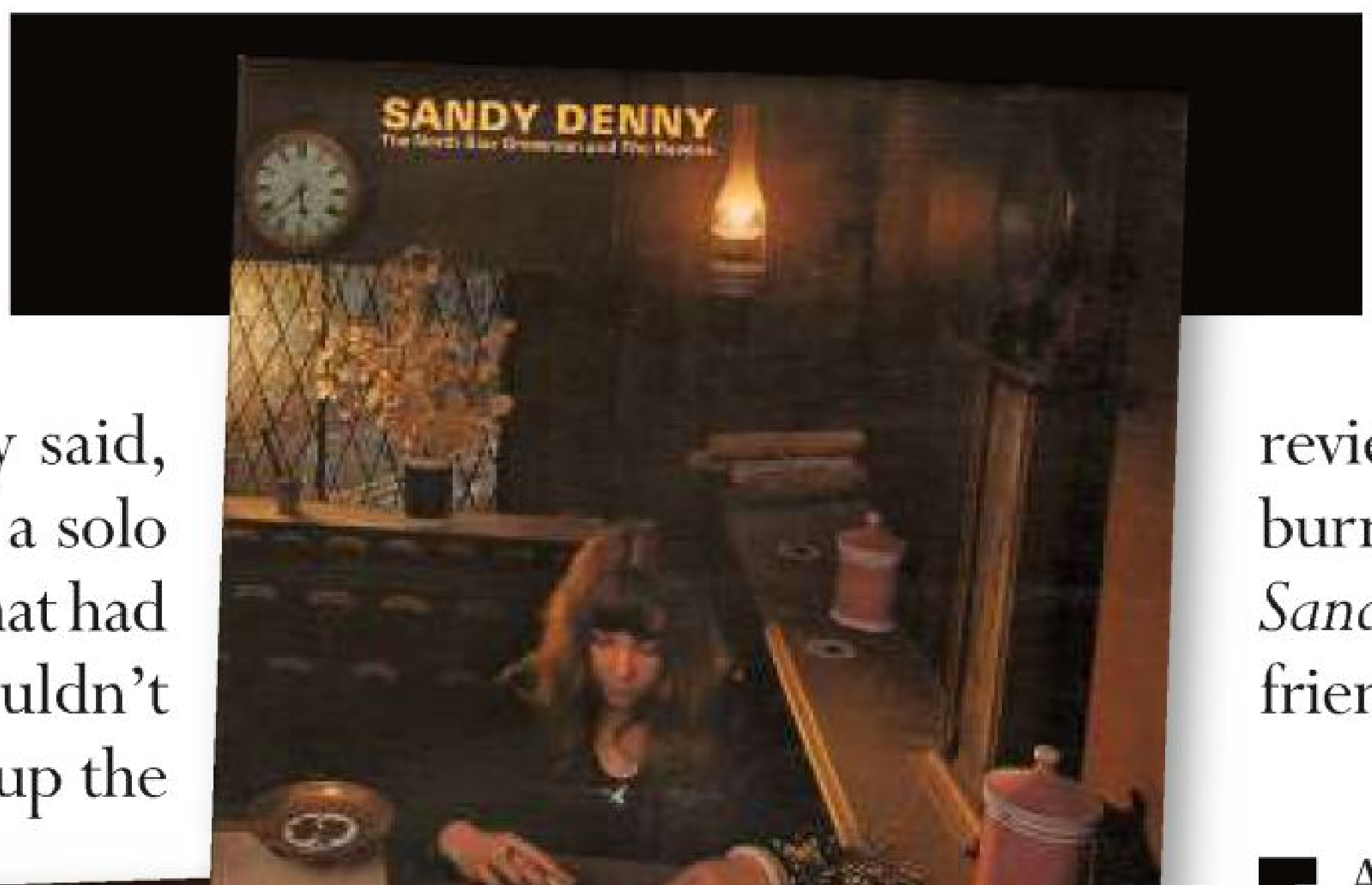
> “She could be lackadaisical in the studio. She’d do anything she could to avoid recording.”
> Richard Thompson

➤ Fotheringay’s demise in New Year 1971 arose around a misunderstanding between Sandy and Joe. With Witchseason in financial difficulties and its artists changing and moving on, Boyd accepted an offer to sell the company and take up a new post in the US. “Most of the groups seemed philosophical about it,” he says. “Sandy and Nick Drake were the most upset. Sandy was freaked out. Complicating matters, I was involved with Linda, so Sandy was like, ‘How could you go and leave Linda behind?’ – there was that whole subtext.”



One evening, in a Chelsea pub after a fruitless session recording John The Gun for a putative second Fotheringay album, Sandy said, “Maybe you’re right, Joe. Maybe I should do a solo album. Would you produce it?” Boyd replied that had she asked two months before, maybe he wouldn’t have gone to America. Sandy promptly broke up the group as a way to make him stay. Donaldson and Conway immediately got work with Cat Stevens, and by the time Boyd realised what had happened it was too late for Fotheringay to regroup.

This curious episode clouded Joe and Sandy’s relationship for the rest of her life. Sandy often expressed a wish that Fotheringay had continued. “We got back to being friends later but I never worked with her again,” says Boyd regretfully. “I went to America and Richard produced her solo record. It was good, but not as transcendentally wonderful a collaboration as I imagined. I was never really close to her after that night.”

“IT WAS TYPICAL SANDY REALLY,” SAYS RICHARD Thompson of the sessions for her first solo record. “She just wanted to go in to the studio and feel comfortable. There wasn’t any producer; we just started doing stuff.” Sandy’s writing tended towards slow or mid-paced songs, which she liked to contrast with covers. While these expressed a side of her that her own material ignored, her voice seems uneasy on something like Let’s Jump The Broomstick; a ragged rendition of Dylan’s Down In The Flood with Richard singing the lead comes across like an outtake from *Unhalfbricking*.

“It was all a bit of a muddle,” Thompson admits. Fittingly, the album’s working title was Slapstick Tragedies, but it became *The North Star Grassman And The Ravens*. With its cover depicting Sandy in an apothecary’s workshop, it wasn’t exactly a package that beckoned to a wider audience. Despite several gems – Late November, John The Gun and the superbly chilling Next Time Around (thought to be written for Jackson C. Frank), its overall haphazard feel dissipated some of the momentum she’d received from the poll wins and *Led Zeppelin IV*.

“In the studio she could be lackadaisical,” says Richard. “She’d do anything she could to avoid recording. Talk mostly. She’d give really half-hearted performances and then come along to the mix and say, ‘That’s a terrible vocal’, and John [Wood] or someone would say, ‘Well, fix it’, and because it was the last chance, she’d do a good one. Always postponing the real performance until the absolute eleventh hour.”

Harbouring ambitions towards production, Trevor saw Joni Mitchell, Carole King and Carly Simon selling millions and reasoned that Sandy could too. Her brother David Denny, who’d been living with the couple in Chipstead Street, gave up his job in civil engineering and became Sandy’s manager, striking a deal with Island that enabled Trevor to produce her next album.

Right from the opening track, It’ll Take A Long Time, the result – *Sandy* – was clearly more focused than its predecessor. Though still broadly in a folk mode, Trevor had modernised the sound and the playing was steadier. Listen Listen and The Lady were among Sandy’s strongest works, her a cappella setting of Richard Farina’s poem The Quiet Joys Of Brotherhood was spellbinding, her voice at its most effulgent and otherworldly.

For many fans *Sandy* was her best work ever. With a glamorous sleeve portrait by David Bailey (“God, that was worth a three-day flap,” laughs one friend), it had all the makings of a hit. But, despite favourable reviews, reasonable promotion and Tony Blackburn making Listen Listen his single of the week, *Sandy* struggled to sell. She began to despair to friends of ever finding her niche.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION, MEAWHILE, was falling apart. Dave Swarbrick and Dave Pegg asked Trevor to join them. He took along Jerry Donahue and Fairport embarked on a world tour.

Forced to go it alone while her husband went off with her old band, Sandy wrote the best songs of her career and unveiled them in America in the spring of 1973. She took an entourage of two: David in his role as manager, and her chum Miranda Ward (formerly the first female presenter on Radio One), who was invited along as assistant, moral support and social lubricant. In New York, she opened for Genesis at the enormous Philharmonic Hall. In Boston and Denver, she supported Randy Newman. Rumours of her rejoining Fairport began to filter back to the UK when they appeared together at the LA Troubadour. Sandy admitted later that she felt “a sudden sense of relief” when they started playing behind her.

Work on her finest album also began in LA, at A&M studios. *Like An Old Fashioned Waltz* manages to conjure not only images of nostalgia but its sensations too. Listening to it is like looking out of a window onto the past. In the stirring opener, Solo, Sandy bemoans the lot of the lone performer – using it as a metaphor for the isolation of every human – but also mocking the singer’s self-delusion: “I’ve always lived in a mansion on the other side of the moon. I’ve always kept a unicorn and I never sing out of tune… I can’t communicate with you and I guess I never will. We’ve all gone solo.”

Dark The Night, Carnival and At The End Of The Day summon the dull ache of solitude, the extruded pang of departure, and a yearning to be reunited with a lover at home. Friends gently tells a lapsed friend to get lost. The title song simply lays out nostalgia’s cliches: flowers, long-ago summers and ghostly music. The finest moment, however, is No End, the final song, in which a man pays a midwinter visit to an old friend, a painter who has given up his vocation. Sandy sings throughout with breathtaking poise. Like Sinatra, her phrasing is inimitable.

The album was cautiously received but Sandy was justly proud of it nevertheless. She played the shows of her life in anticipation of its October release, most notably an appearance at the Howff, a tiny venue in Primrose Hill, on September 4, 1973. The performance was ecstatically received, and not just by the music press. The Daily Telegraph, a publication not known for hyperbole, declared: “It was one of those happenings that critics dream of but rarely experience, when a good but hitherto erratic singer suddenly takes off, carrying her audience with her on the kind of trip that singing is really all about.”

SANDY DENNY
LIKE AN OLD FASHIONED WALTZ

Just a few days beforehand, Sandy and Trevor impulsively set their wedding ➤

Bringing it all back home: in the Fulham flat she shared with Trevor Lucas, 1970.

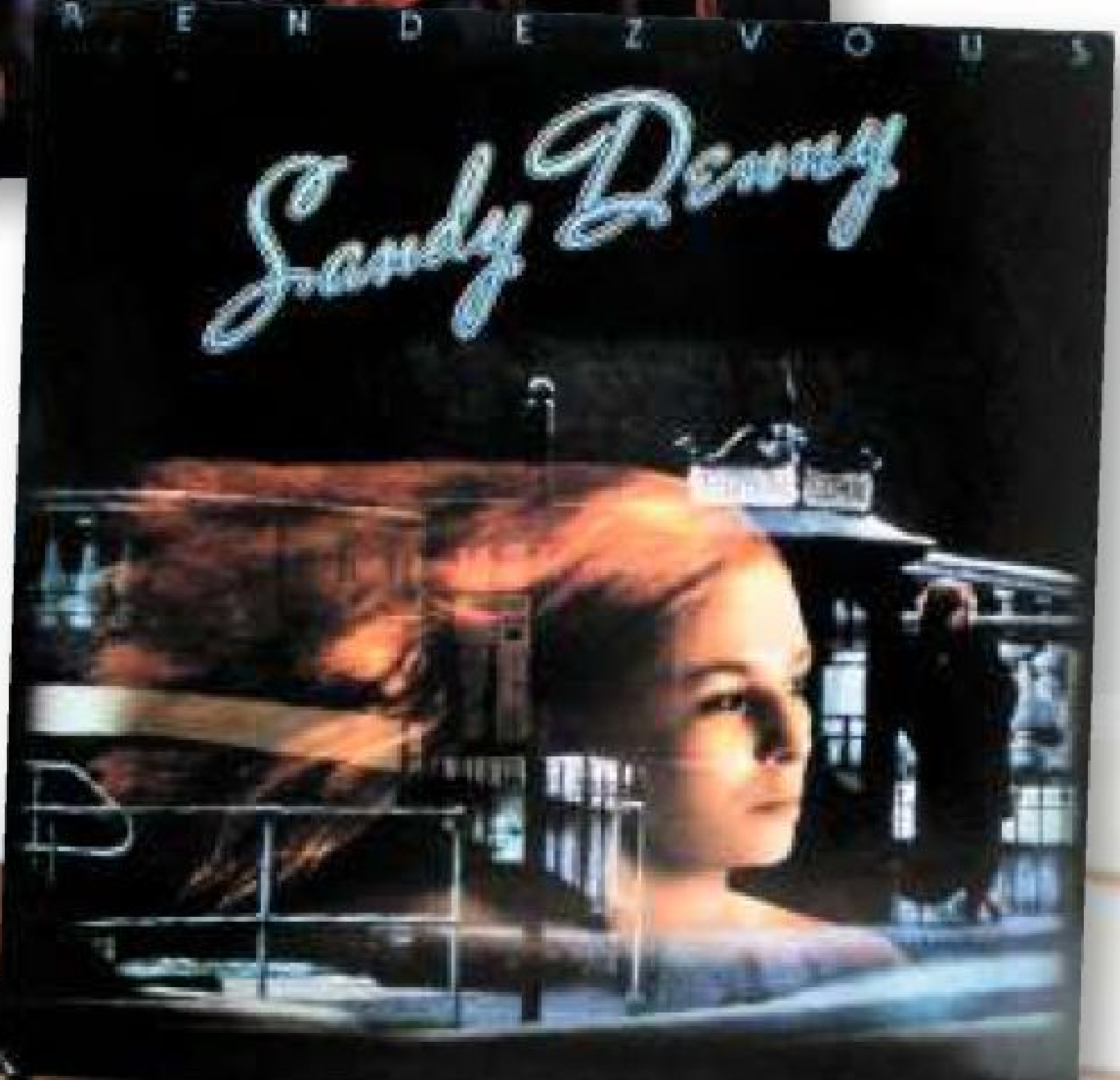
for Thursday, September 20, 1973. Sandy bought the wedding dress in a fleamarket and Miranda Ward dyed it green. Trevor went to get a ring but was foiled by Wednesday half-day closing, so Miranda lent him one Ginger Baker had given her. Meanwhile, Sandy called her old beau Danny Thompson and asked him to improvise as best man – and accompany them on their honeymoon.

The 'honeymoon' turned out to be a Fairport TV appearance in Plymouth and a night in a Holiday Inn. Danny joined the party and spent most of the return trip in a drinking contest with Dave Pegg. "The purser on the train came up afterwards and told us our party had drunk 500 miniatures of gin. That was the kind of environment Sandy was in. She wouldn't see that as being nasty or blokeish – she'd join in and fall about laughing."

But drink was beginning to exert its grip on her personality. David Sandison remembers seeing Sandy backstage at the Howff. "The show was mind-boggling, fantastic, but she was drinking really heavily afterwards. And she wasn't an amiable drunk. She got belligerent and argumentative."

JANUARY 26, 1974: THE FIRST ROCK act to play at the Sydney Opera House was Fairport Convention, and Sandy was back in the fold. As long as Trevor stayed with them and Sandy wanted to be with him, it seemed inevitable. But the ambitious world tour, which included their first Japanese visit, was financially ruinous. The band returned to the UK despondent and practically bankrupt, and dismissed their manager. David Denny took over temporarily and a live album was rushed out to help the cash flow. In the meantime, Sandy and Trevor moved to the heart of the country.

Rising for the Moon
FAIRPORT CONVENTION



The Northamptonshire village of Cropredy had no idea what had hit it when Dave Swarbrick and his wife Gloria moved in. The takings at The Red Lion went up for a start. Swarb's friends and colleagues flocked to visit and liked it so much they all made plans to live there. Mr and Mrs Trevor Lucas bought a house in a neighbouring village called Byfield, and Dave and Chris Pegg moved into Cropredy shortly afterwards. It would never be quite the same again.

Trevor and Sandy soon became the talk of Byfield. He'd swan through the village in his orange and lime-green Beetle; she'd weave to and from Cropredy's pubs in her automatic Rover, usually with Watson the Airedale in the back. The locals learnt to give her a wide berth. She could often be found trying to extricate the car from a ditch.

With most of the band and its associates based nearby, Fairport Convention could party hard together both on tour and off. It was a festival of drugs and alcohol. Apparently there was even a period when Fairport discovered amyl nitrate. Merrie England indeed.

Wedding belles: Trevor and Sandy married at Fulham registry office on September 20, 1973.

"I had two small children at the time and thought I was insane and everybody else was normal," recalls Chris Pegg. "It was only later I realised that I was the sane one and they were all off their heads. Swarb and Sandy had a lot of flare-ups – they were very similar in many ways. Trevor loved them both and was caught in the middle. Trevor and Sandy were very fiery together. Trevor acted as a buffer zone between Sandy and the outside world. She had an incredible imagination and lived in a slightly different world to the rest of us."

> "I thought I was insane and everyone else was normal. It was only later I realised I was the sane one."
>
> Chris Pegg

Working with such a couple put a strain on the band. Apart from the politics, there was the problem of assimilating Sandy's new, post-folk style into their traditional sound. "There were two different bands," remarks Dave Mattacks. "One with Sandy, and Swarb's instrumental band doing uptempo dance stuff. It didn't really gel live."

In the midst of this turmoil, Fairport started work on an album. It felt like make or break. The harder they'd been working, the slimmer the returns; they needed a record that would lift them out of the mire. At Chris Blackwell's suggestion they hired Glyn Johns, acclaimed producer of the Stones, The Who and The Eagles, known for his discipline in the studio. *Rising For The Moon* was cut in two sessions, each side of another American tour.

When they returned, Dave Mattacks left the band, dismayed at their eternal financial struggle. "I began to realise that this music was never going to be big, it would be remain a minority thing," he says.

Dave Pegg: "I thought, We've no finished songs, no drummer and nobody's talking to each other! We're finished! Within a week it was done. Glyn Johns was a genius. It was a miracle album."

The closing song was a Denny masterpiece. One More Chance is a call to peace, woven into some of the most stirring instrumental work Fairport ever recorded and sung in a tone that was new to Sandy, mature and powerful but perceptibly fragile.

SANDY NEVER CHANGED THE WAY SHE WAS bound to go. Though her work kept improving, her career refused to lift off. She felt pressurised whatever she did: forming a band or going solo. Her marriage felt lopsided: she told friends that she needed him more than he needed her, then sometimes she wondered if he was just using her to further his own career. She could never relax. Feeling settled was one of her prime goals but her mind was too sharp to keep still.

When *Rising For The Moon* was not the hit that Fairport needed, Island dropped them. Jerry Donahue decided to leave the band and Trevor and Sandy followed. In the winter of 1975 she wrote the material for another solo album, *Rendezvous*, which was recorded the following spring. The new songs were revealing. I'm A Dreamer is clearly about a tense relationship between two musician lovers, which concludes: "The truth is I don't think I'll ever go." If she was unhappy she showed few signs of it a year later when *Rendezvous* was finally released, insisting that the enforced break had been very useful. "It's taken me since last summer to get back some sanity, something I didn't even realise I'd lost."

"It was a difficult record to make," confirms John Wood. "She'd started having these very black moods. She wouldn't turn up, or she'd turn up very late. Trevor would be trying to cajole her into doing things that she wasn't so keen on. She was not in control of herself. It took a long time for material to come together and her mood swings became much greater. Halfway through it, she turned up [at my house] at two o'clock in the morning, virtually battering the door down, drunk and in a complete state of nervous exhaustion, feeling totally unloved and unwanted."

Lawn society: Fairport Convention shortly after *Unhalfbricking* was released, 1969.

Then she got pregnant. Her manic energy didn't wane, neither did her drug intake. *Rendezvous* sounded rather fusty in 1977, the summer of the Sex Pistols and Chic, despite stunning tracks like I Wish I Was A Fool For You (a Richard Thompson song), One Way Donkey Ride and a superb, one-take performance of I'm A Dreamer. A cover of Candle In The Wind seemed a cheesy choice. However, No More Sad Refrains declared that Sandy wanted to move away from her stock-in-trade.

Georgia Rose Lucas arrived two months early, weighing barely two pounds. Thankfully, the John Radcliffe Hospital in nearby Oxford was a renowned centre for premature baby care. Georgia remained there for some weeks. But Sandy wasn't about to slow down. The album was out and there were shows booked. As usual, Trevor appeared the more adept domestically.

IT WAS A DISTURBING TIME. SANDY'S CONTRACT WITH Island finally expired and was not renewed. She'd become entangled in a secret affair with Pat Donaldson, who was in her band for a short string of dates. The final show, at the Sound Circus in the Royalty Theatre, London, was recorded. Sandy's voice was huskier and more fragile than before, but the performance was intense and passionate. It would prove to be her last gig. Some of the other shows had been poorly attended; *Rendezvous* and a single of Candle In The Wind both sold dismally. Trevor and Sandy's marriage seemed to be under terminal strain.

"The villagers were worried about what was going on," says Chris Pegg. "They expected her to behave differently now she had a baby, but she didn't alter the things she'd always done. While Trevor was away, she would leave the baby outside the pub. People would call us and say, 'There's an orange Beetle with a screaming child inside.' We'd go and try and get Georgia and Watson wouldn't let us in. It sounds terrible, but she wasn't neglecting Georgia any more than she neglected herself. She just wasn't the most responsible person."

When Sandy fell down the stairs with Georgia, it made up Trevor's mind. He began to prepare a move. He tidied his affairs, sold the Beetle and bought a one-way ticket to Australia. He intended to return to his parents, whom he could trust to look after Georgia while he prepared a new life for himself. He also hoped to shock Sandy into getting help with her addiction. He told nobody in the Fairport camp of his plan or destination except new drummer, Bruce Rowland.

Sandy took his leaving surprisingly well. "She was very stoical and strong," remembers Miranda. "She wasn't going to get hysterical, though she was convinced I knew where Trevor was. I was the one who was getting hysterical. After she'd gone to bed I was frantically ringing people asking where he'd gone. They were all denying that they knew anything."

The following morning, Sandy complained of a headache. She'd been suffering from them for some time, and they'd worsened since the heavy fall a few weeks previously. Over the weekend, Sandy and Miranda had several long conversations, reminiscing and talking about the future. Sandy was adamant that she wouldn't beg Trevor to return. On Sunday she had a long phone call with her brother David. She went to bed in the early hours in an optimistic mood.

At 6am she awoke with another terrible headache. She woke Miranda and asked for a painkiller. At around 3pm, Miranda was telephoned at school and told that Sandy had been found unconscious by Jon Cole and taken to Queen Mary's Hospital in Roehampton. She was in a coma.

On Wednesday, Sandy was transferred to the Atkinson Morley hospital, specialists in brain injury, for an operation. Trevor flew back from Australia. The surgery wasn't a success. That Friday evening she passed away, just before 8pm.

The fall-out from Sandy's death was strange. Fairport fell apart and Dave Swarbrick exiled himself to Scotland for a while. Neil and Edna left Devon. Miranda suffered a nervous breakdown and moved to the West Country. Trevor married Elizabeth Hurtt, a former lover of Swarbrick's, and moved back to Australia to bring up Georgia; he died of heart failure in 1989. David Denny died in a road accident in Colorado in 1980. Having lost both her children, Edna Denny died broken-hearted soon after, though Sandy's father Neil lived for another two decades – long enough to ask MOJO, "Why am I still here and all those good people are gone?"

Photos courtesy of Sandy Denny Archive. Thanks to Phil Smee

STRANGE

They were kids from the Hollywood Hills who wanted to play British Invasion rock. But an overbearing mentor who didn't care much for their own songs, or which musicians made their records, had other ideas. **MARK PAYTRESS** *spins the troubled tale of garage legends* **THE ELECTRIC PRUNES**.

Portrait: **GERED MANKOWITZ**

FRUIT

"What's purple and goes buzz, buzz, buzz?"

YOU GUESSED IT… AN ELECTRIC PRUNE. FUNNY? Compared with the ordeals of the band whose name that joke inspired, it's a side-splitter. The Electric Prunes were garage rock royalty in that brief moment when fuzz was king and before acid and flowers shattered pop's three-minute time barrier. Yet their extraordinary tale is a virtual masterclass in why so many *Nuggets*-era combos emerged in a flash, then faded into obscurity, only to be resurrected years later as rock legends.

Their mentor and producer was a man named Dave Hassinger, best known for his mid-'60s production work for the Stones. He discovered them, recorded them, antagonised them and, when they became surplus to his requirements, ruined them. He was both the group's saviour, liberating them from a suburban garage in leafy Hollywood Hills, and their jailer. Then, he disappeared.

Electric Prunes drummer-turned-private investigator Preston Ritter was one of many ex-associates who tried – unsuccessfully – in the '80s to track Hassinger down. "I'd heard that he'd died, so I searched the American Social Security Death Index, but found no one that would fit his age and description," he recalled. "Warners told me he'd not collected his money in years. The trail went cold in 1987. Believe me, if I could have found out, it would have made it possible to get back royalties I'm owed."

Hassinger eventually died a recluse in Canada in 2007, aged 80, and Ritter in 2015.

But although receiving their royalties would have been nice, almost five decades after the Prunes faded into insignificance the focus has been on restoring their musical reputation.

The group's story has been muddied by numerous myths and mysteries – for instance that they were drug-addled zanies who'd send stand-ins on tour while, newly enlightened by religion, they concocted rock's first ever concept album. These were half-truths at best. The reality requires no window-dressing.

"The experience left such a bad taste in our mouths that I didn't care if the band's name was ever mentioned again," says Prunes singer James Lowe.

ANYTOWN: SPRING 1967. THE ELECTRIC PRUNES are asleep. Their motel has seen better days, though when you're midway through an exhausting package tour schedule, at three in the morning a bed is all that matters. Lenny Poncher, the band's manager with a sideline in car parts, was hopping mad. "We'd be the other side of the country and in the middle of the night the phone would ring," remembered bassist Mark Tulin, who passed away in 2011. "It was the management office: 'Hey, you guys weren't wearing your Prune suits again last night…'"

The Prune suit, a joyously hideous head-to-toe outfit in purple velour, was the perfect symbol of the group's enduring conflict with their power-brokers. "I saw the kids and I knew what they wanted," says James Lowe. "They didn't want this stupid image. They wanted us to be real people." Dressed up like "Pat Boone on acid", as Tulin described them, the proto-psych pioneers languished perilously over a credibility gap the size of California. The Electric Prunes didn't seem to belong.

"There was no *Nuggets*, no punk rock back then," Tulin explained. "Even the term garage band didn't come until much later," says Lowe.

There was little hint of the troublesome future ahead in winter 1964/65 when, to accommodate their son's latest obsession, the Tulins found a new home for the lawnmower and donated the family garage to the cause of popular music. Bass-playing Mark was joined by high school colleague Ken Williams on guitar, drummer Michael Weakley, and a singer who'd experienced a little of life beyond Woodland Hills in the northern suburbs of Los Angeles.

"I was a little older," James Lowe drawls, "had bummed around Hawaii looking for the best wave, and hung out with [surf guitar king] Dick Dale."

A surviving March 1965 direct-to-disc session cut as The Sanctions reveals enthusiasm triumphing over ability, but it also lays bare the nascent Prunes' earliest musical passions with untidy versions of pop and R&B standards (Long Tall Sally, Love Potion No. 9 and a woeful Louie Louie) and a surf instrumental, Moon Dog. A second acetate, cut six months later as Jim And The Lords, is significantly more focused and snottier. The four-track session draws predictably from The Beatles (I'm Down) and the Stones (I'm Free), though it's James Lowe's moody Little Olive, with its reverbed voices and blue harmonica notes, that shows the most noticeable musical progression.

The Tulins were tolerant, but not all the good citizens of Woodland Hills could cope with the local reaction to the British Invasion on their doorstep. The family was presented with a petition demanding that the music stop, but it went unheeded. Then one day an estate agent called Barbara Harris passed by. Impressed by what she heard, she bragged that she knew someone in the music business and told the boys, "I think he'd like you." Enter Dave Hassinger, a staff engineer at RCA who'd been instrumental in creating the mid-'60s Rolling Stones sound and now wanted a piece of the action himself.

"None of us was really what you'd call musicians at that stage," Lowe admits. "Like every garage band, we were simply trying to learn our instruments by banging on them and making some kind of noise." Hassinger encouraged them to focus their ambitions. "He saw us trying out original material, but his advice was to take chart hits and concentrate on creating an arrangement. That was the key for us – the breaks, the stops, the droning."

Signing the group to his independent Damo Productions company in spring 1966, Hassinger told them to find a new name and installed them at Leon Russell's home studio in Skyhill Drive, in the hills above the valley. "The control room was in the kitchenette, another room had been turned into a studio, and we communicated by talk-back because there was no glass," Lowe remembers. Hassinger manned the tiny Ampex four-track machine (Russell, busy with Gary Lewis And The Playboys, was rarely around), and the newly baptised The Electric Prunes soon had their first single. The producer placed it with Reprise.

Ain't It Hard, written by Gypsy Trips members Roger and Terrye Tillison, was an undistinguished, uptight take on folk-rock notable for its sneaky drug reference: "Your brother's in the bathroom/ With acid in his head".

"Can I say this on a record?" the singer asked the group's mentor. "What does it mean?" the producer replied innocently.

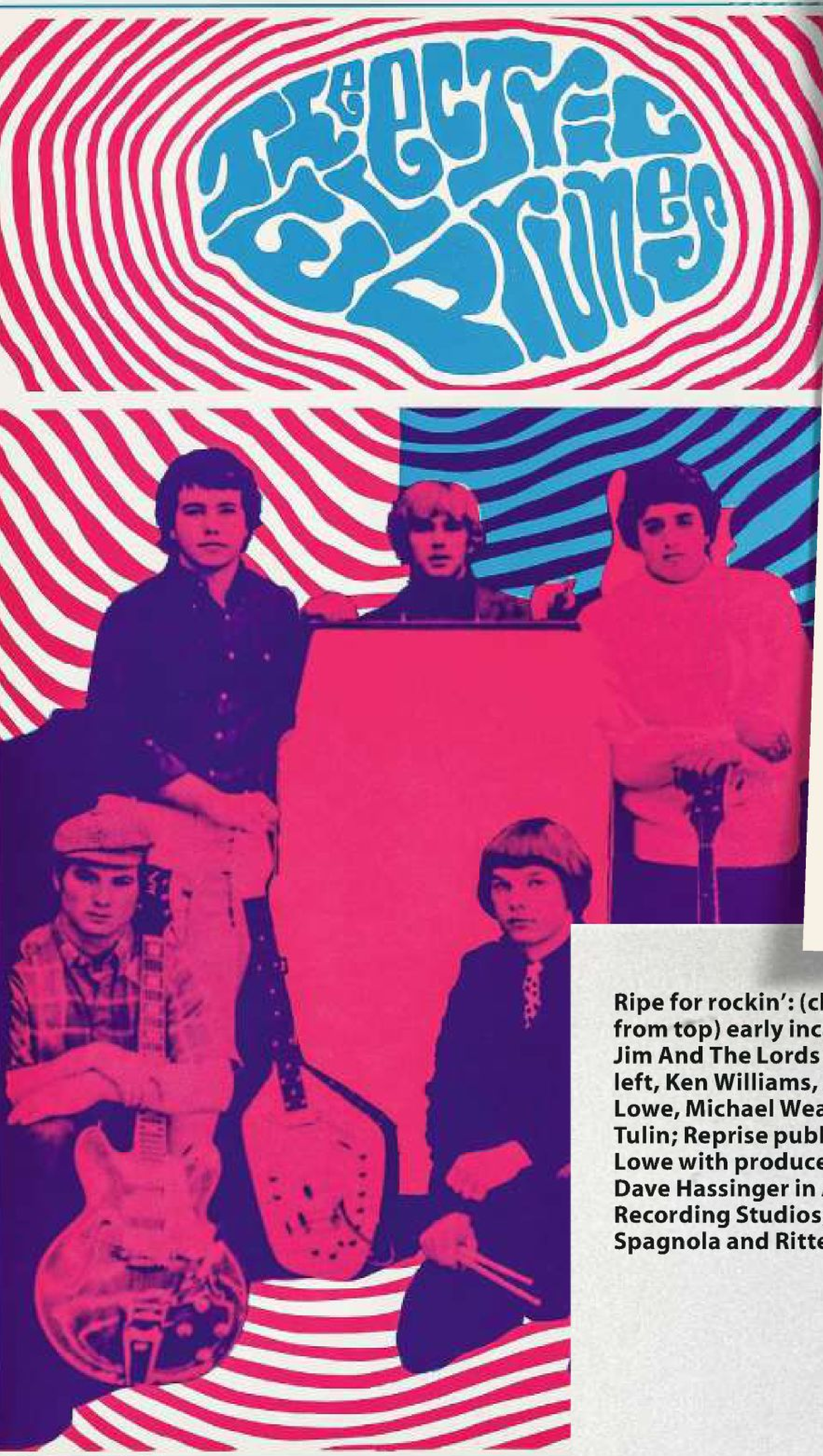
"Dave [Hassinger] was a strait-laced, alpaca-sweater-wearing guy who'd trained in the military and smoked coloured Sherman cigarettes," Lowe says. Somewhat unimpressed by their idea for a new name, the producer was only won over – or so legend has it – when he ran it past a grinning Mick Jagger during a break in the *Aftermath* sessions in March 1966.

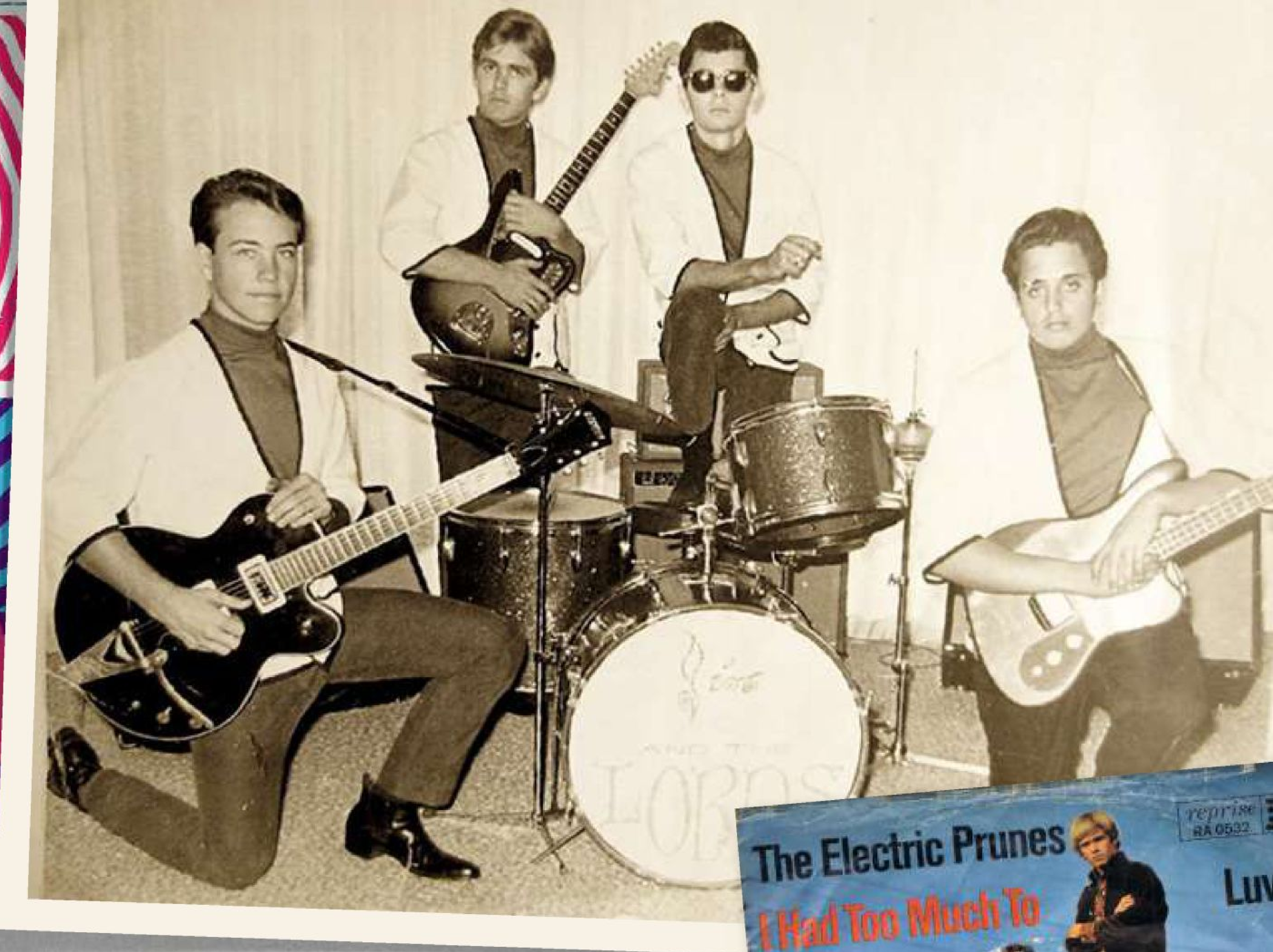
The single stiffed, but the ambitious Hassinger was undeterred. He introduced the Prunes to manager Lenny Poncher, and to two young songwriters, Annette Tucker and Nancie Mantz. One of their first offerings was I Had Too Much To Dream ➢

[redacted]

"Our producer Dave Hassinger was a strait-laced guy who'd trained in the military and smoked Sherman cigarettes."

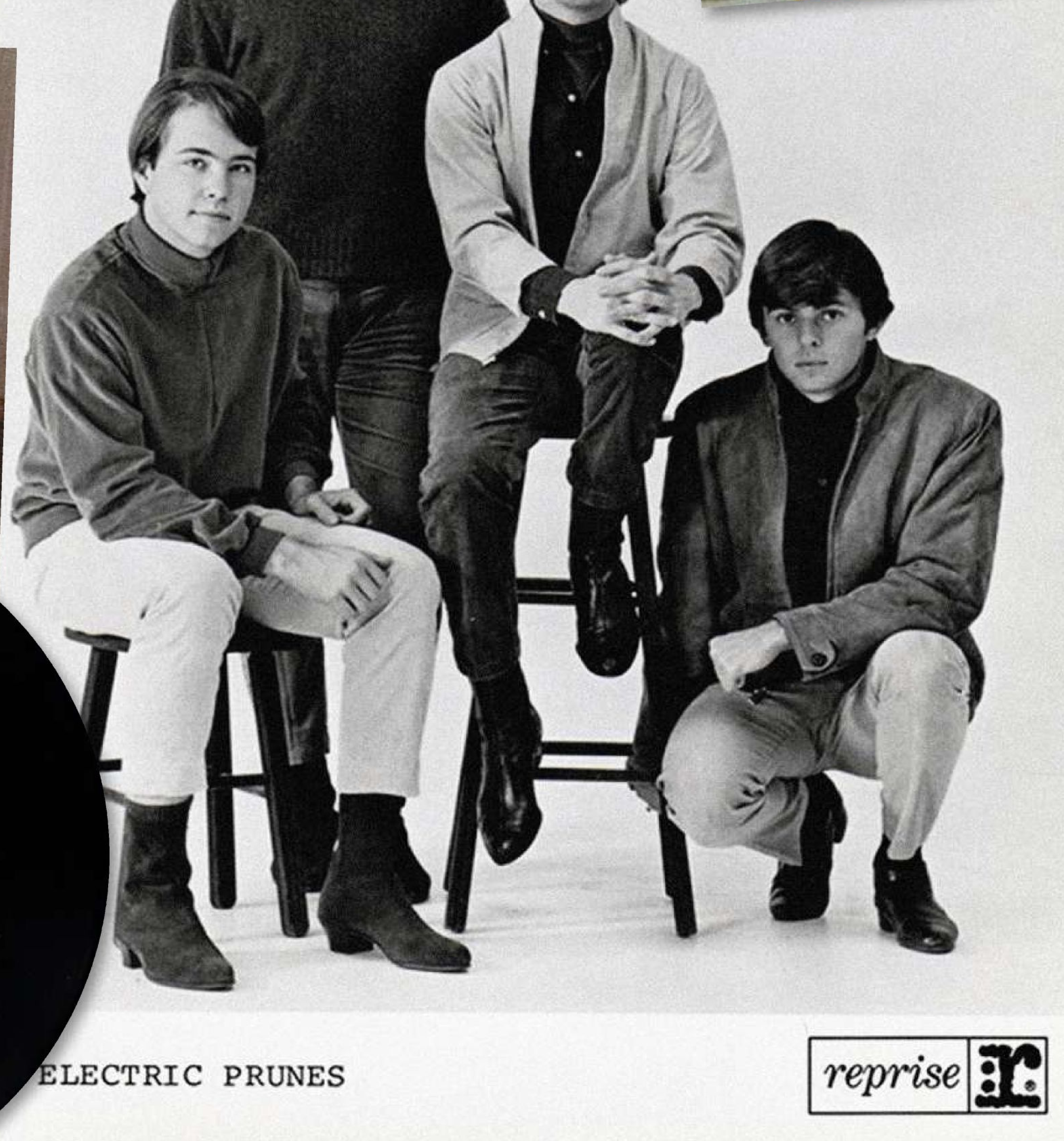
Pamela Lowe (2)


The Electric Prunes


Jim
And The
LORDS

reprise
RA 0532
The Electric Prunes
Luv
I Had Too Much To Dream
SCE

Ripe for rockin': (clockwise from top) early incarnation Jim And The Lords with, from left, Ken Williams, James Lowe, Michael Weakley, Mark Tulin; Reprise publicity shot; Lowe with producer/mentor Dave Hassinger in American Recording Studios; poster of Spagnola and Ritter '67 line-up.


ELECTRIC PRUNES
reprise

reprise
WARNER BROS. RECORDS, INC.
MADE IN U.S.A.
THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
0473
(JX4190)
AIN'T IT HARD
(R. Tillison-T. Tillison)
Viva Music
BMI - 2:10
Produced by Dama Productions

> "After what we'd been experiencing in the studio, playing live gave us a strange sense of freedom."

[redacted]

(Last Night). Hassinger loved the title, though the band weren't overly impressed by the demo, cut by Jerry Fuller.

"It was a ballad with strings," sighed Tulin. According to Tucker, the song was not written with an orchestra in mind, but the producer at their music publisher Four Star "cut it that way because he wanted to". She is clear about the song's meaning: "Nancie and I had no drug thoughts when we wrote that. It was sexual. Sex was always in the back of our minds."

I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night) was one of six demos cut at Leon Russell's studio that spring. "All anyone ever said was, 'That's the odd one,'" Lowe recalls. The song became odder still when during another session the Prunes accidentally hit upon the otherworldly oscillation that gave the song its distinct, ominous introduction. "Dave cued up a tape but didn't hit 'record', so this ear-shattering, vibrating jet guitar came out. Ken had been shaking his Bigsby wigglestick with some added fuzztone and tremolo. Forward, it sounded cool, but backwards it sounded amazing."

Drummer Preston Ritter, sitting in for Michael Weakley who'd refused to sign Hassinger's contract [the band had also added rhythm guitarist James 'Weasel' Spagnola by this time], recalls the effect happening differently. "It was well thought-out. Dave suggested that Ken play some fuzz guitar, which he then spliced out, let it play backwards and got Ken to double up, mimicking the rising sound with a volume pedal."

Whether the infamous intro was salvaged by James Lowe from the demo session, or recreated at Hassinger's favoured American Recording Studios on Ventura Boulevard, the end result was the same – a triumph of production-desk manipulation, with bursts of Eastern-sounding backward guitar and busy tambourines woven into this stop-start tapestry of electronically enhanced delight.

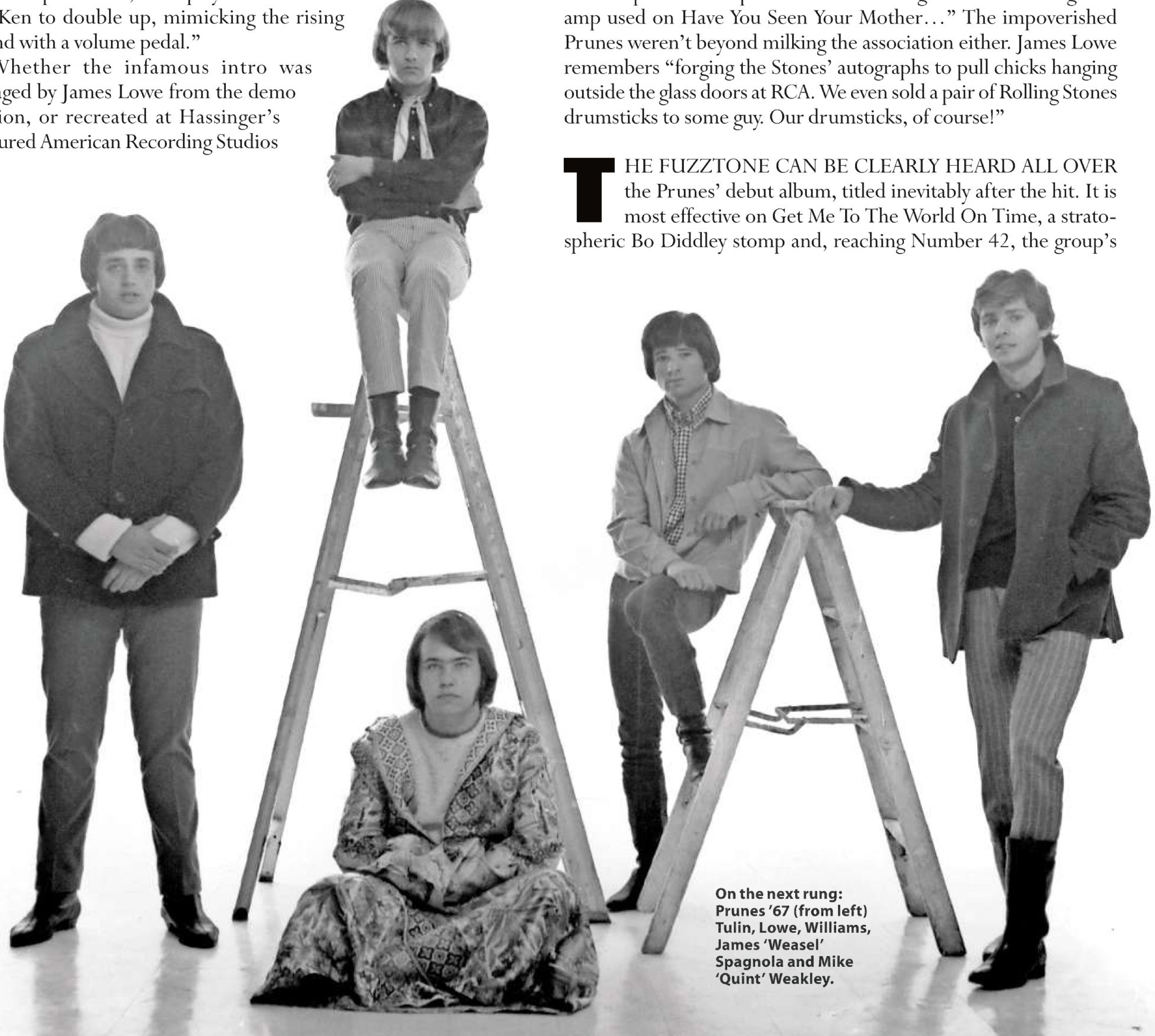
"An Idea-A Sound-A Mood Group-A State Of Mind To Defy Any & All Description," purred the publicity. For once, the sound lived up to its hype. Issued in November 1966, Dream first broke in Seattle, and then state by state. By February 1967, The Electric Prunes found themselves one spot shy of the Billboard Top 10.

The newcomers were duly dispatched to promote the record. "You don't realise what's going on," says Lowe. "They stick you on the train, close the door and you're heading down the track at 100mph."

These 60-cities-in-45-days package tours – Prune suits to be worn at all shows – were endurance tests. Returning home to discover they'd barely broken even and had to go back out on the road again made touring doubly gruelling. Tulin, at least, felt it was all worth the effort. "After what we'd been experiencing in the studio, playing live gave us a strange sense of freedom. If you wanted to hit a chord, you hit it. And nobody could do a thing about it."

"Our Gibson Fuzztone was the one the Stones used on Satisfaction," claimed Preston Ritter. "Through Dave's connection, we also ended up with a couple of their Firebird guitars and the big bass amp used on Have You Seen Your Mother…" The impoverished Prunes weren't beyond milking the association either. James Lowe remembers "forging the Stones' autographs to pull chicks hanging outside the glass doors at RCA. We even sold a pair of Rolling Stones drumsticks to some guy. Our drumsticks, of course!"

THE FUZZTONE CAN BE CLEARLY HEARD ALL OVER the Prunes' debut album, titled inevitably after the hit. It is most effective on Get Me To The World On Time, a stratospheric Bo Diddley stomp and, reaching Number 42, the group's



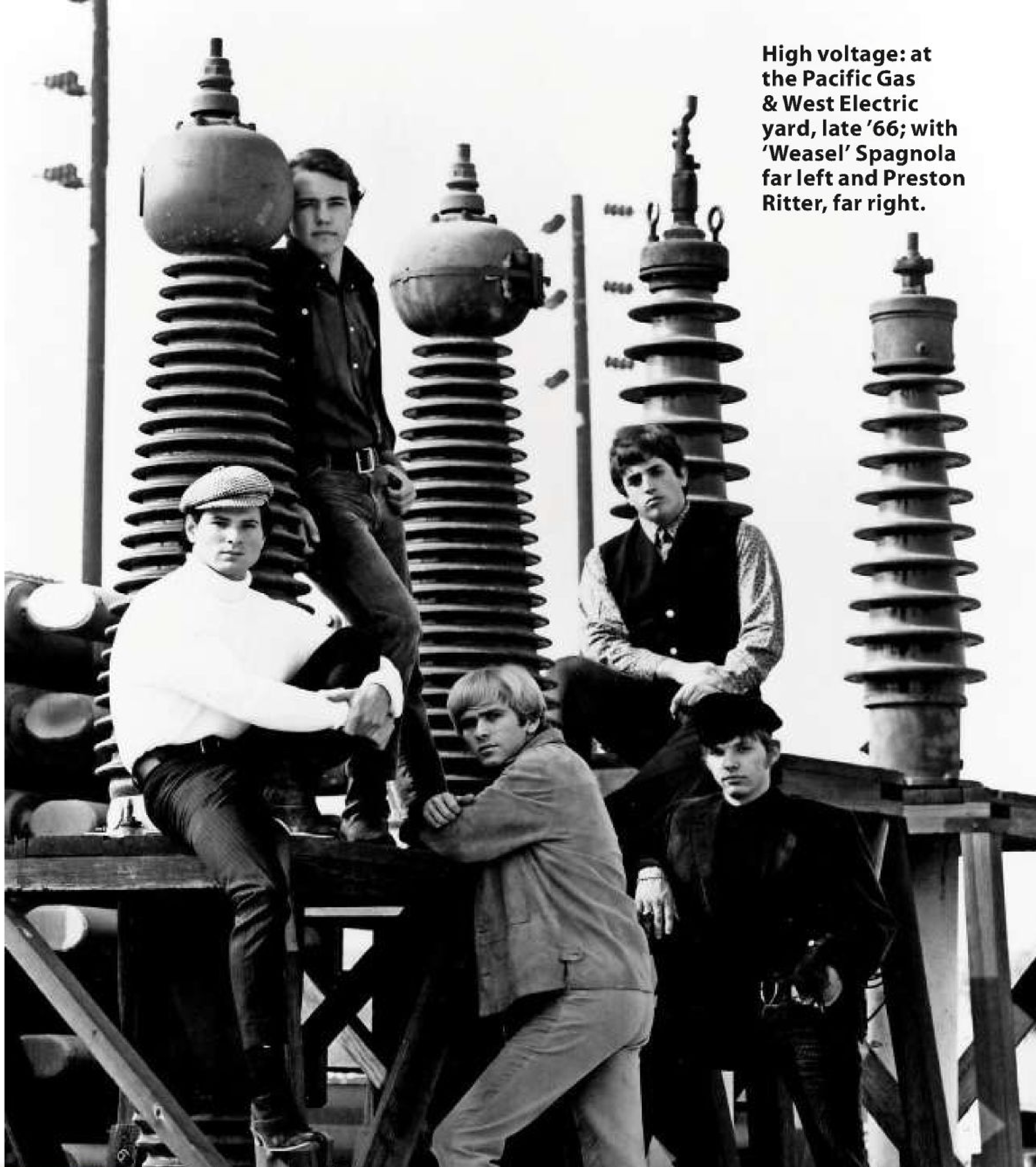
On the next rung: Prunes '67 (from left) Tulin, Lowe, Williams, James 'Weasel' Spagnola and Mike 'Quint' Weakley.

best British chart placing. But there's a hideous irony in Barbara Harris's supposed endorsement on the sleeve – "…one eye, one mind, one direction".

"The producer was a dictator," said Ritter. "He was determined to get what he wanted in the studio, even though we often disagreed with his choice of material." Arranger Perry Botkin, who'd been roped in by Hassinger to add strings and brass, had no doubts about what was required of him. "There was no art involved," he says. "We were all just trying to make a record that the public would buy."

"I remember James politely asking if we could put one of our own songs on the record," said Mark Tulin. Hassinger insisted that Tucker and Mantz (and occasionally Tucker and Jill Jones) were the writers. "Dave always thought we should be like The Beatles – do a music-hall song, then a rocker, a ballad. All we could do was try and make the material 'ours'."

That wasn't easy with Onie crying out for the lachrymose Lesley Gore treatment, The Toonerville Trolley becoming a kitsch saloon-bar singalong, and Hassinger demanding mock-baroque on The King Is In The Counting House. There were, however, moments when the Prunes' own musical personality shone through, as with the Pink Floyd flavours of Are You Lovin' Me More (Or Enjoying It Less), the Jagger-styled sexual effrontery of Try Me On For Size and the ludicrous, balalaika-like guitar that gives Sold To The Highest Bidder a Joe Meek-like quality.

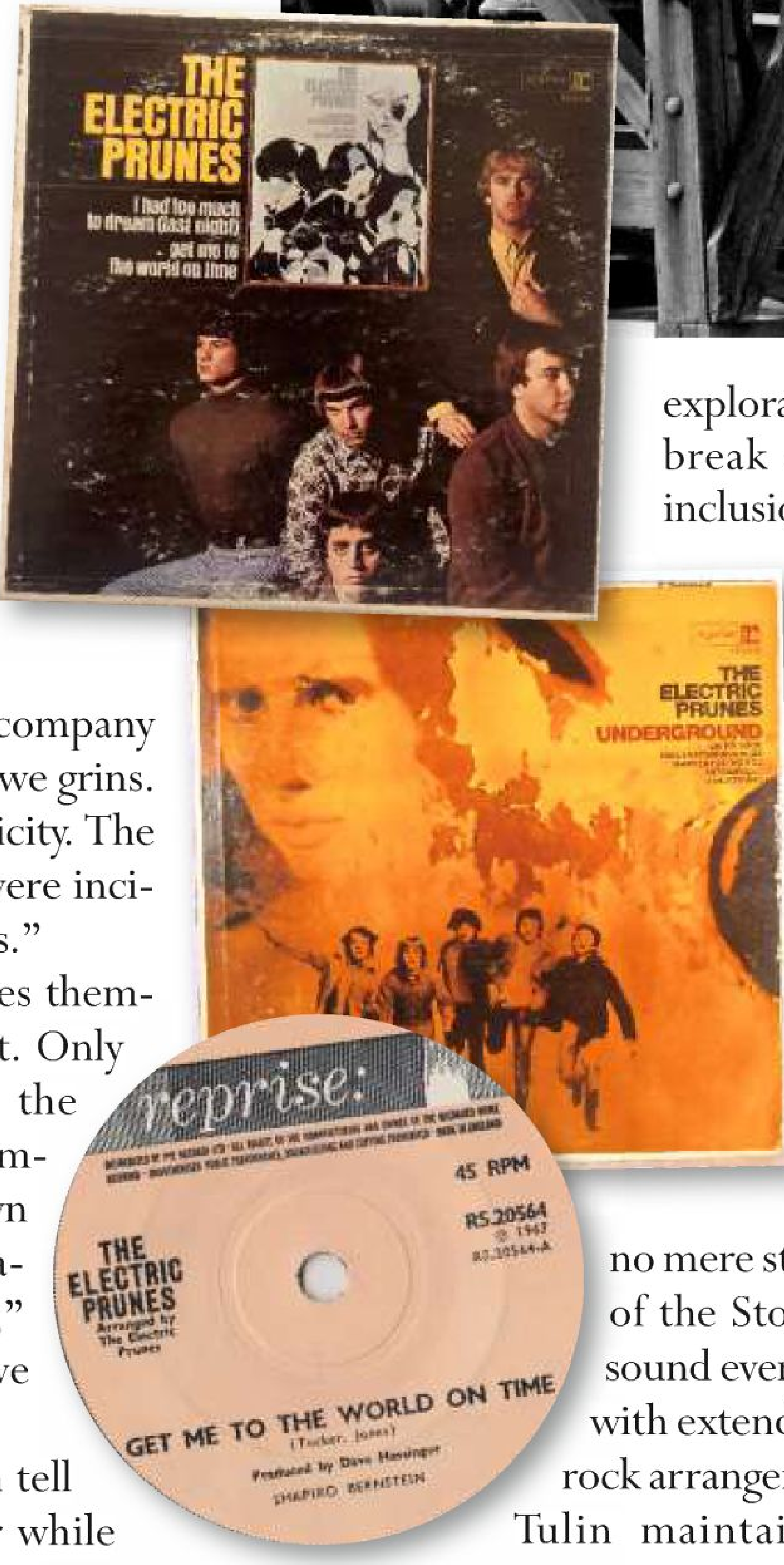


High voltage: at the Pacific Gas & West Electric yard, late '66; with 'Weasel' Spagnola far left and Preston Ritter, far right.

By late spring 1967, psychedelia was blossoming. Poised to clean up, The Electric Prunes instead became mired in struggles with their producer and manager. Though occasionally still bullied into their Prune suits, the band, particularly James Lowe, were starting to bite back.

"The minute 'issues' came up, all these props and limos would materialise," he remembers. "I'd ask where the cheques were and we'd be packed off to buy clothes. It became a game." Another ruse to pacify the group was to set up lucrative sponsorship deals; a small fleet of Vox amplifiers was delivered in exchange for the Prunes' endorsement of the company's new wah-wah pedal.

Being signed to an independent production company didn't help. "That Electric Prunes mystique?" Lowe grins. "That was because we never had any proper publicity. The record was the only important thing. The band were incidental. There was no concept of developing artists."


THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
I had too much to dream (last night)
. get me to the world on time
THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
UNDERGROUND
reprise:
45 RPM
RS.20564
THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
Arranged by The Electric Prunes
GET ME TO THE WORLD ON TIME
(Tucker, Jones)
Produced by Dave Hassinger
SHAPIRO BERNSTEIN

With their hectic touring schedule, the Prunes themselves had little time for their own development. Only when Warners sent Hassinger off to produce the Grateful Dead's debut album did the Prunes summon up the courage to demo a few of their own songs. "We'd pay to cut them, then present the material as if they'd been written by someone else," said Lowe. "Once Dave said he liked them, we could tell him they were ours."

Hassinger was evidently past caring. "You can tell when a guy's reading a newspaper on the floor while you're recording that he's stopped paying attention," continues the singer. Despite their psychedelic inclinations, The Electric Prunes now admit that they'd become wary of its more faddish aspects. Hassinger, of course, was truly flummoxed by flower power. "He just didn't understand it," says Lowe. "The Dead asked him to record 'thick air' and that exasperated him. We're looking at a Dinah Shore version of what youth culture was."

Thanks in part to Hassinger taking a surprising step back, much of *Underground*, issued in August 1967, was psychedelic in everything but name. The Great Banana Hoax, which kicked off the record, was too meandering to succeed on 45, but its tense, exploratory style, topped by a heady acid-rock guitar break set the tone. Tragically, the cost-cutting inclusion of leftovers from the first album once again diluted the overall effect. But with an exhilarating take on Goffin/King's I Happen To Love You, the Airplane-like jamming on I and the Floydian improvisation on Children Of Rain, the album remains a cult delight.

The one time in their career that The Electric Prunes felt free and in control was when they took off for a European tour in late November '67. With Ritter and Spagnola now replaced by a returning Mike 'Quint' Weakley and Mike Gannon, the group ably confirmed that they were no mere studio concoction. An extraordinary recording of the Stockholm show, unearthed in 1997, reveals a sound every bit a match for the West Coast's big-hitters, with extended acid-rock workouts and robust, near hard rock arrangements. "That tour was a turning point for us," Tulin maintained. "We realised we didn't have to tolerate this anymore."

Prior to their departure, the Prunes had suffered the worst indignity of their career thus far. Three hours into the recording of their third album, Dave Hassinger stopped the session and promptly banished half the group from the studio. David Axelrod, who'd meticulously scored the new album at the behest of Lenny Poncher [his manager too], in order to stem the Prunes' failing career, witnessed the scene. "I knew immediately that it was going to be a disaster," he says, "but I didn't like the way Hassinger handled that. There are ways to tell guys that they're not going to be playing. He was so blunt. I got mad at him about that." ➢

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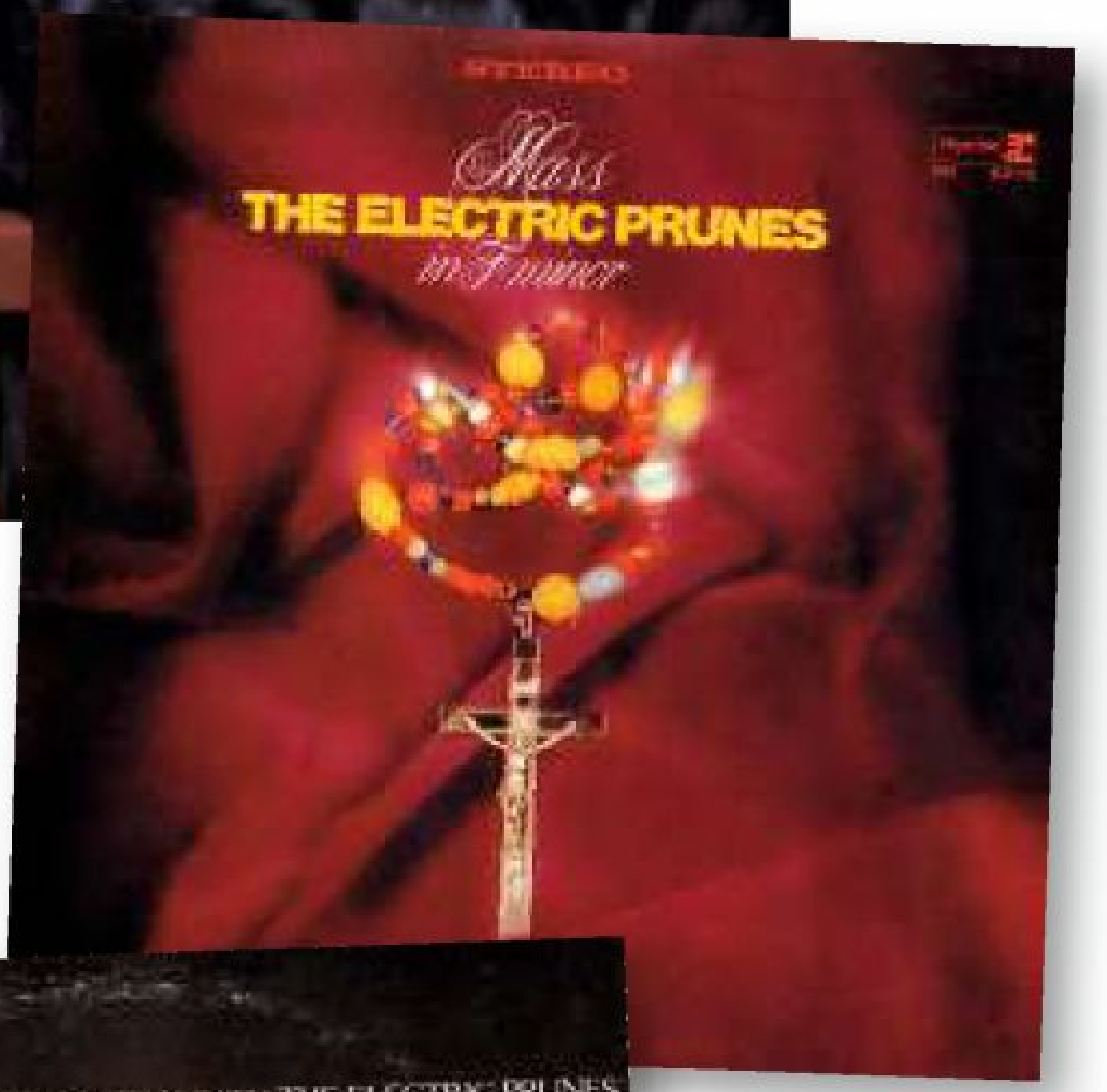
Breaking free: late '67 touring Prunes with Spagnola's rhythm guitar replacement Mike Gannon far left.



RELEASE OF AN OATH THE ELECTRIC PRUNES

the new improved Electric Prunes just good old rock and roll.

FOR DECADES, IT HAS BEEN ASSUMED THAT the original Electric Prunes had little, if anything, to do with *Mass In F Minor*. Axelrod confirms that the rhythm section of Mark Tulin and Quint played on every track; that James Lowe and Tulin – together with Bill Henderson, who contributes exemplary guitar throughout the record – sang Gregorian-style vocals throughout; and that the full Electric Prunes line-up can be heard on the opener, Kyrie Eleison. That was more than enough. The performance is extraordinary, and irrespective of who played on subsequent tracks, it's clear that the session players used this song – which later turned up on the Easy Rider soundtrack – as a template for the rest of the record.

As they waited at the airport bound for London, the Prunes were handed early copies of the finished album. They'd not written it, nor had more than half the band performed on it, but Jim Lowe maintained a veneer of enthusiasm for the press. "We arranged all the parts so that we could keep it clean," he said, "but all the solos are totally free and improvised. It's got nothing to do with organised religion," he added. "It's all about enjoying and discovering the self."

Lowe remembers it differently now. "*Mass* was the antithesis of the freedom we'd discovered in England. It was as if we'd come to a fork in the road. Band and management were heading in totally opposite directions."

Events were yet to take at least two more farcical turns. "We got a call in somewhere like Miami," Tulin remembered. "They said, 'When you get back, you're gonna play the *Mass* live', and they sent us all the charts. When we got back, we had one rehearsal with me attempting to conduct. I'd watched Bernstein, so I knew what to do – point at people!"

"Some kid yells, 'Do the hit!' and throws a beer bottle… and then another. Eventually the police were called."

The performance took place outdoors in Venice High School. "Don Randi, a jazz pianist, was brought in to conduct on the day," Lowe recalls, "but he'd been out on his boat and his skin was fried like a lobster." Randi counters by blaming the group. "They sucked," he says. "All of a sudden, some kid hollers, 'Do the hit!' And throws a beer bottle. And then another… The curtain starts to close and I ran. Eventually, the police were called."

Mass In F Minor gained considerable publicity but failed to sell, so the Prunes – whose last stand was You Never Had It Better, the tough, fuzzed-up flipside to their last single, Everybody Knows You're Not In Love – were packed off on tour again. "We had obligations to fulfil," says Lowe. "Plus we'd heard that Dave Hassinger wanted to do Madame Butterfly next. That's when we realised they could take our name and do whatever they wanted with it."

One spring night in Texas in 1968, the Prunes cracked. A two-week stand-off between Lowe and Tulin came to an ugly head. "There was an argument at the hotel," recalled Tulin. "He said, 'You're not talking to me.' I said, You're absolutely right, I'm not. He just walked out and headed straight for the airport."

Tulin soldiered on [with Kenny Loggins briefly joining the ranks] for what was "possibly the worst tour of all time", but by mid-'68, both he and Ken Williams had also quit. David Axelrod, meanwhile, had been commissioned to write another concept piece, *Release Of An Oath*. There was one problem: no Electric Prunes. Out of the blue, Colorado-based Richard Whetstone received an SOS from Rich Fifield, then playing in the Poncher-managed, Axelrod-produced Hard Water.

"Lenny Poncher convinced us that if we became The Electric Prunes we could make millions," says Whetstone. "We followed blindly. My feeling is that we fulfilled Dave Hassinger's agreement with Reprise. He held the cards. His production and publishing agreement was the core of the Prunes' career."

One last album, *Just Good Old Rock'n'Roll*, was released under the Electric Prunes name, but it had absolutely nothing to do with the original band. Eventually, even Hassinger and Poncher fell out.

However, after a 22-year hiatus, Mark Tulin and James Lowe made up and began recording and touring as The Electric Prunes, a venture that won them a generation of new fans, but which has slowed down since Tulin's death in 2011.

"What prompted us was that we'd started to read things that said we didn't play on our records," says Lowe, "that we were a Monkees-like set-up. We thought, After all we've been through, now they don't even think we played on any of that stuff… That's just not true." Ⓜ

Alamy

PIN-UPS

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE BEING BEAUTIFUL!

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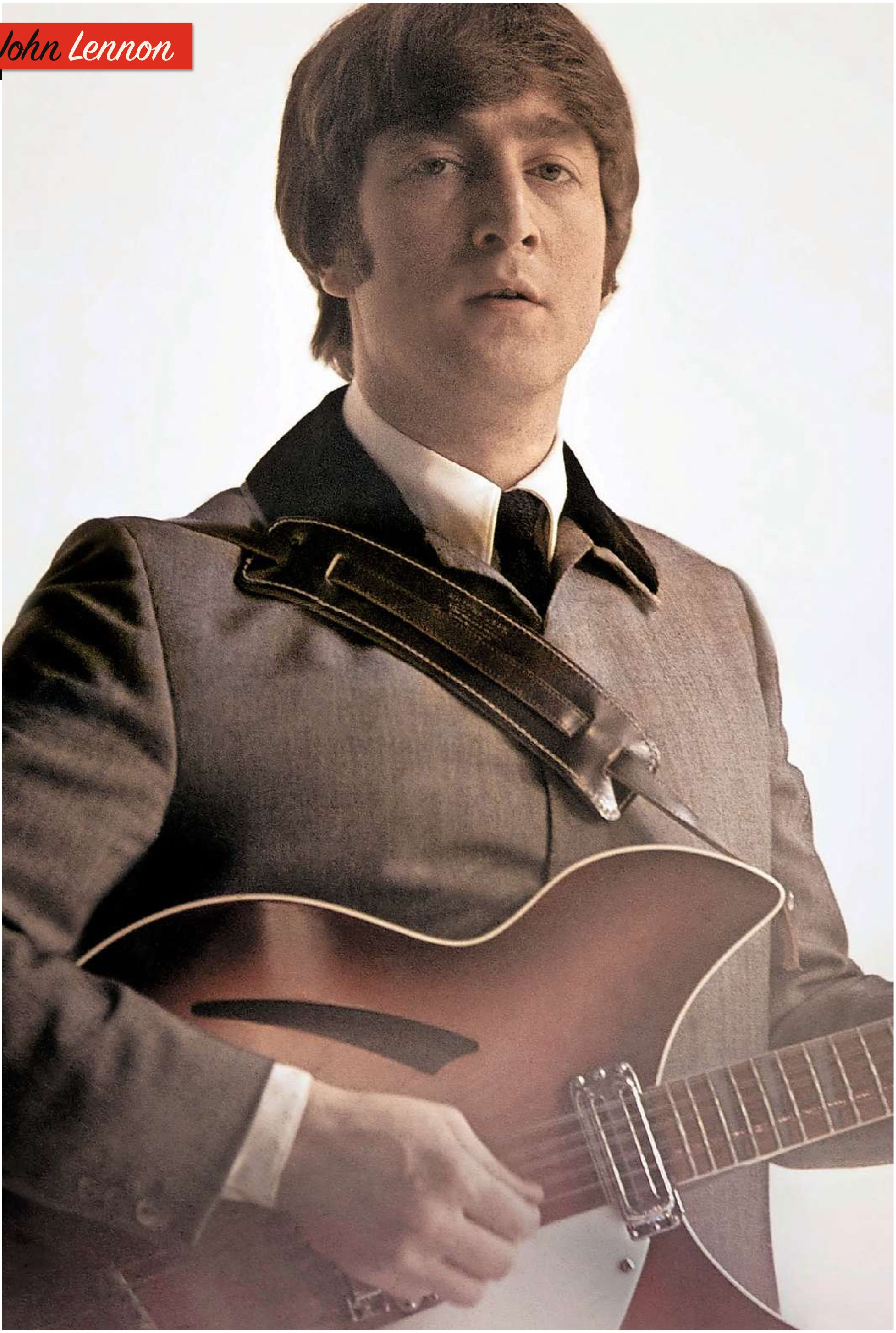
Includes **THE SONICS JOHN LENNON SLIM HARPO KEITH MOON THE MONKS THE ANIMALS THE KINKS ARETHA FRANKLIN JOHN COLTRANE NICO**

Aretha Franklin

Getty

Rex

John Lennon



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Slim Harpo

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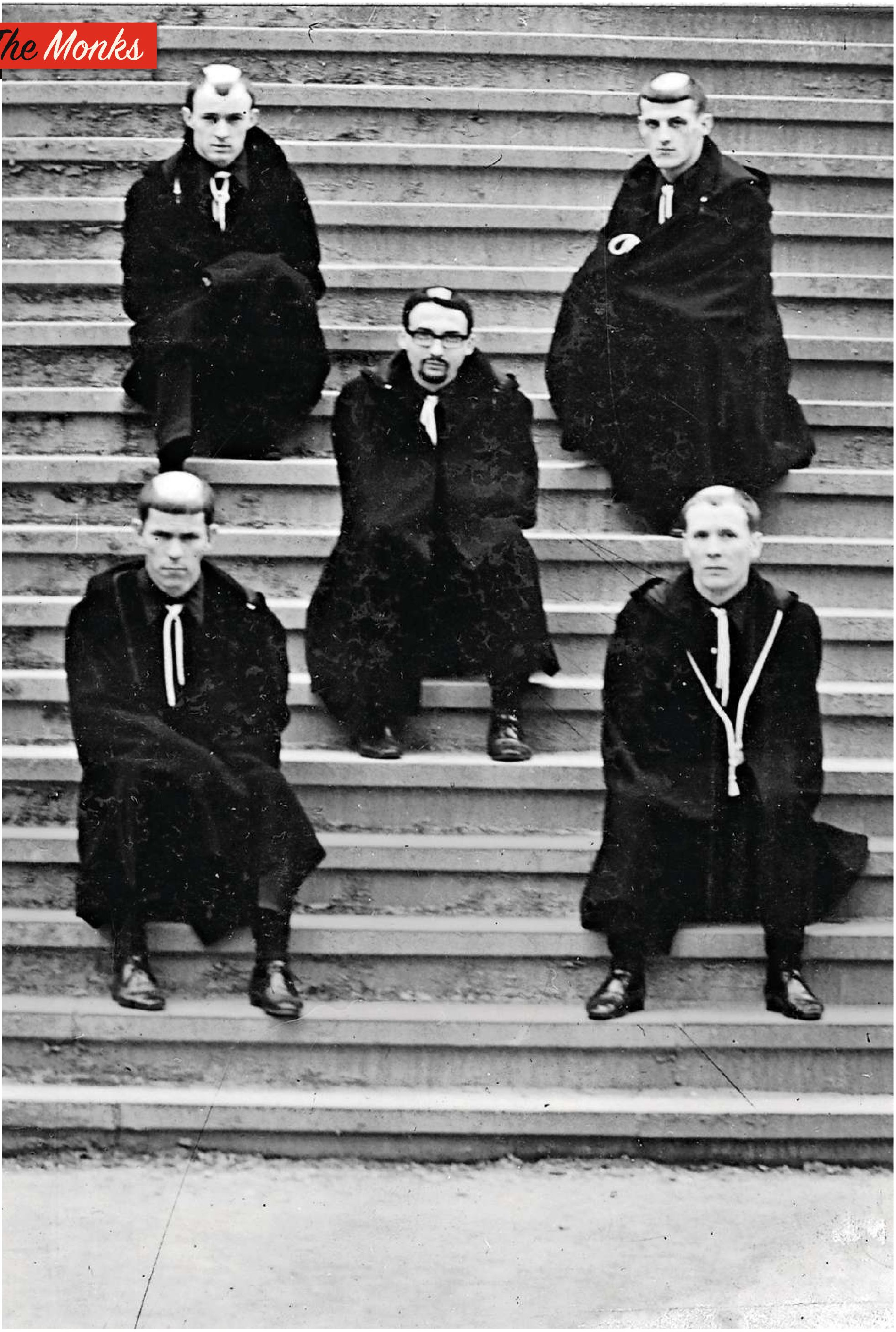

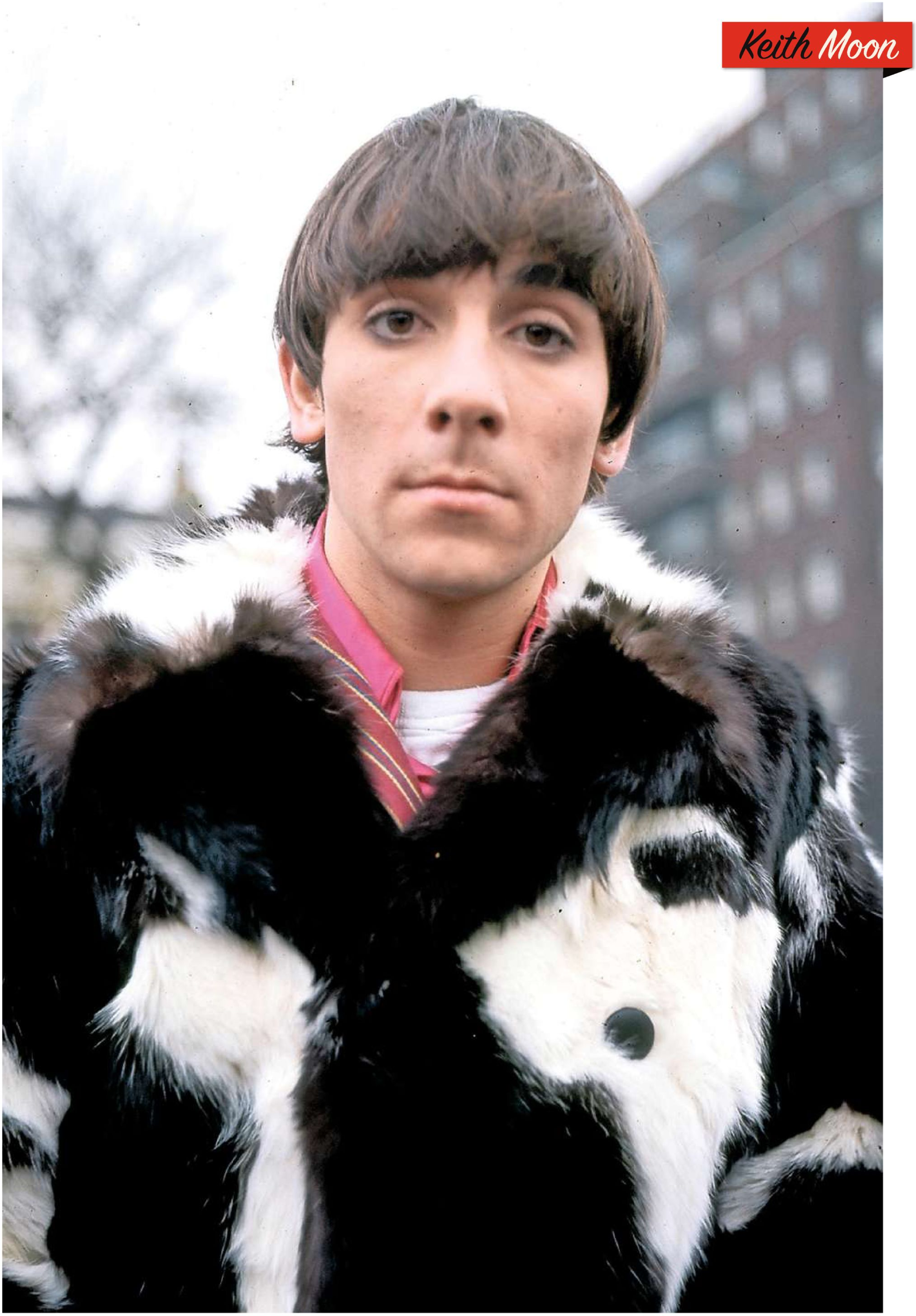

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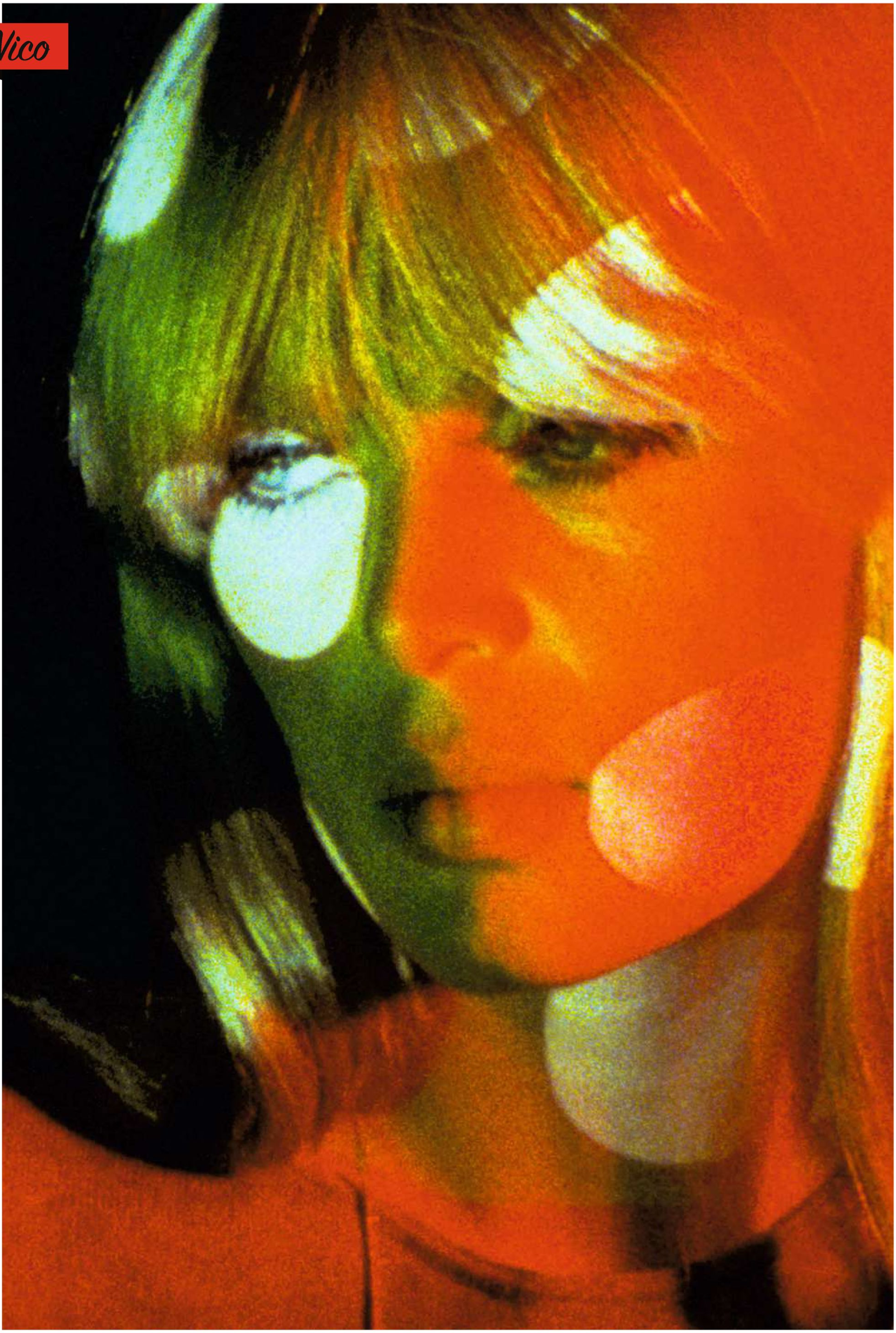
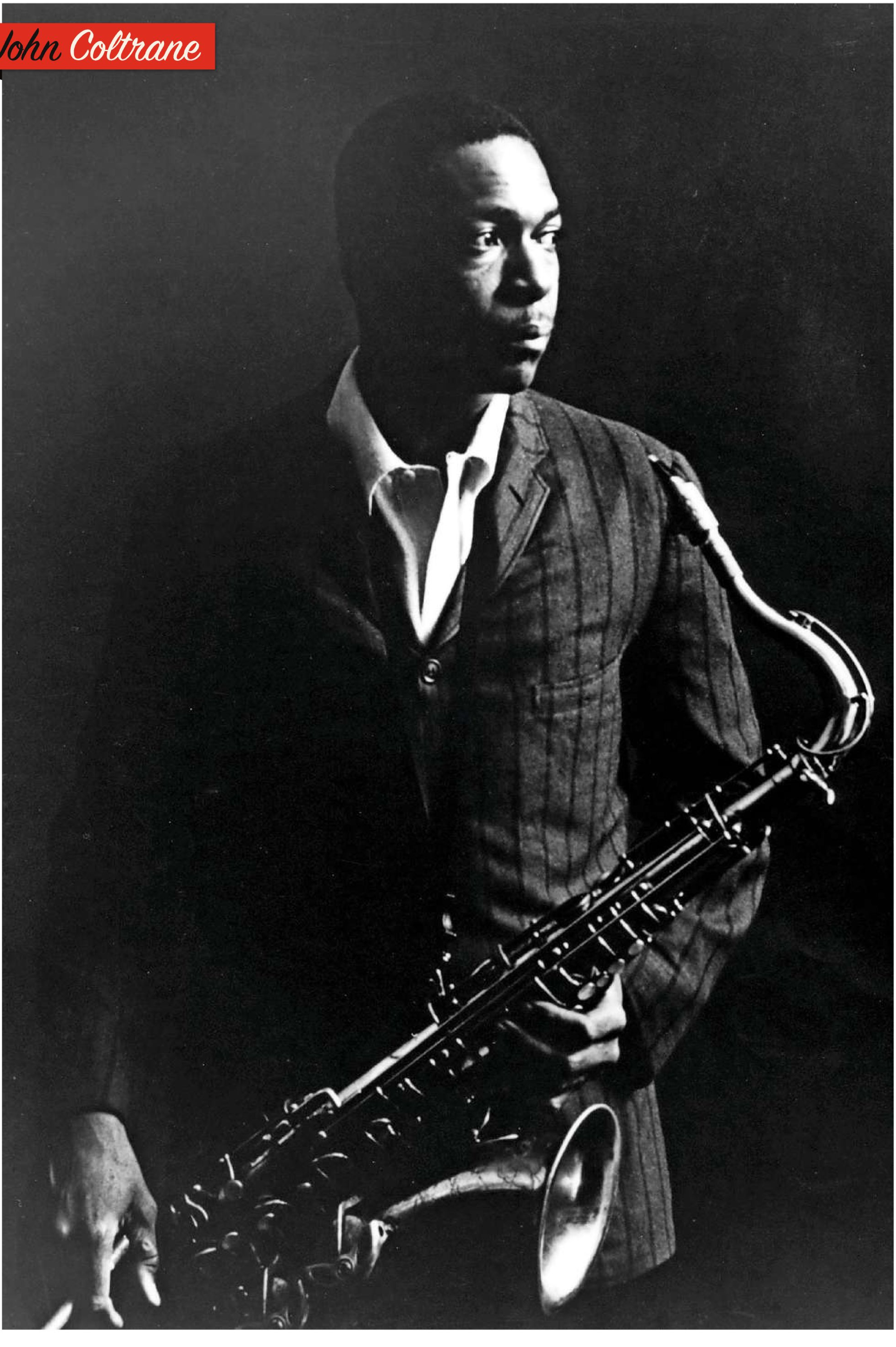


Rex

Getty

John Coltrane



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BLO

When **PINK FLOYD** *lost their frontman and songwriter* **SYD BARRETT** *to his inner demons in early 1968, it began a painful journey of personal and musical self-discovery. On the following pages, the surviving members open up to* **MARK PAYTRESS** *about the Syd era and its confused aftermath; meanwhile, on page 92, Floyd biographer* **MARK BLAKE** *provides a month-by-month account of Barrett's troubled last year with the band and, on page 98, previews the group's gargantuan new box set, The Early Years.*

WUP

Let there be more light: Pink Floyd and light show, The Architects Association Students Christmas Carnival, Bedford Square, London, December 1966.

Shine on: Syd Barrett at the home of photographer Andrew Whittuck, Hampstead, London, July 1967 and (opposite) with Pink Floyd, late 1966.

IN JULY 2007, FOUR DECADES after Pink Floyd released their debut album, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, the four surviving band members – Roger Waters, David Gilmour, Rick Wright and Nick Mason – agreed to reminisce with MOJO about that epochal record and the difficult years that followed after the group's singer and songwriter Syd Barrett was fired. But Roger Waters, billed as the "creative genius of Pink Floyd" on a recent solo tour, was in no mood to celebrate *Piper*'s anniversary.

"If it's something I care about, like a new 5.1 mix of *Wish You Were Here*, I'll listen to it and stick my oar in," he said (unaware then that the 5.1 mix of *Wish You Were Here* wouldn't actually arrive until 2011). "But *Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*? Frankly, I don't really care." The whiff of provocation hangs in the air.

Released on August 5, 1967, two months after The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper*, and just as flower power hit full bloom, Pink Floyd's debut is the real soundtrack of that psychedelic summer. But Waters, who told me in 2007 that he'd not heard the record in "25, perhaps 30 years", is not convinced.

"You'll never get me to take this stuff seriously," he sniffed. "However hard you try, it's not gonna happen, OK? I refuse to take any of it seriously. We were just young guys getting together, wanting to be rich and get laid."

While there's the ring of truth in his last assertion, Waters' insistence that Pink Floyd weren't a 'serious' band during their first year as pop professionals defies all the evidence. Watch '60s filmmaker Peter Whitehead's studio footage of the group performing Interstellar Overdrive, shot just before the *Piper…* sessions began, for a fascinating glimpse of four earnest, well-scrubbed young men in pursuit of improvisational nirvana.

Alternatively, check out an October '66 issue of The Sunday Times (a step up the cultural ladder from Rave magazine) to find Waters himself explaining the band's lofty ambitions as: "Co-operative anarchy… a complete realisation of the aims of psychedelia".

For final proof, just surrender once more to the magnificent *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* as it floats towards its 50th birthday in 2017. Only in it for the money and the women? Surely there were easier ways?

Though there is no way Roger Waters would ever admit it, there's probably a simple reason why, four decades on, he couldn't take Floyd's salad days seriously. *Piper…* is a reminder of a time when he was neither comfortable with his role in the group or with the pop process in general, when he'd hardly mastered his instrument yet, let alone found the voice that today enables him to lay claim to being the band's key player. In 1967, there was only one creative genius in Pink Floyd and his name was Syd Barrett.

SPRING 1967. ANOTHER LATE NIGHT LOCKED AWAY in Studio Three, Abbey Road, north-west London. There's Syd, his pasty face and dark eyes partly obscured by a mop of fashionable curls and a cloud of cigarette smoke. The youngest of the group and the last to join, a little over two years earlier when Floyd were a run-of-the-mill R&B combo known as The Tea Set, Barrett is the band's songwriter and resident pop star in waiting.

"Syd was absolutely up for it as soon as we signed that EMI contract in February 1967," recalled drummer Nick Mason. "There was no suggestion at all that he might be uncomfortable with the idea of becoming a pop star."

Despite Mason's assertion, a strange dichotomy already lay at the heart of the combo then going out as The Pink Floyd. As the house band of London's emerging underground scene, their live sets largely consisted of long, exploratory instrumental 'freak-outs' with mind-frying oil-based light projections that transformed the four ex-students into grainy, slow-moving shadows. Yet these abstract soundtracks, performed at UFO and their 'sound/light workshops' at the London Free School in Notting Hill, contrasted dramatically with the dozen or so pop originals that Barrett wrote in a creative flurry late in 1966 and into the early days of '67.

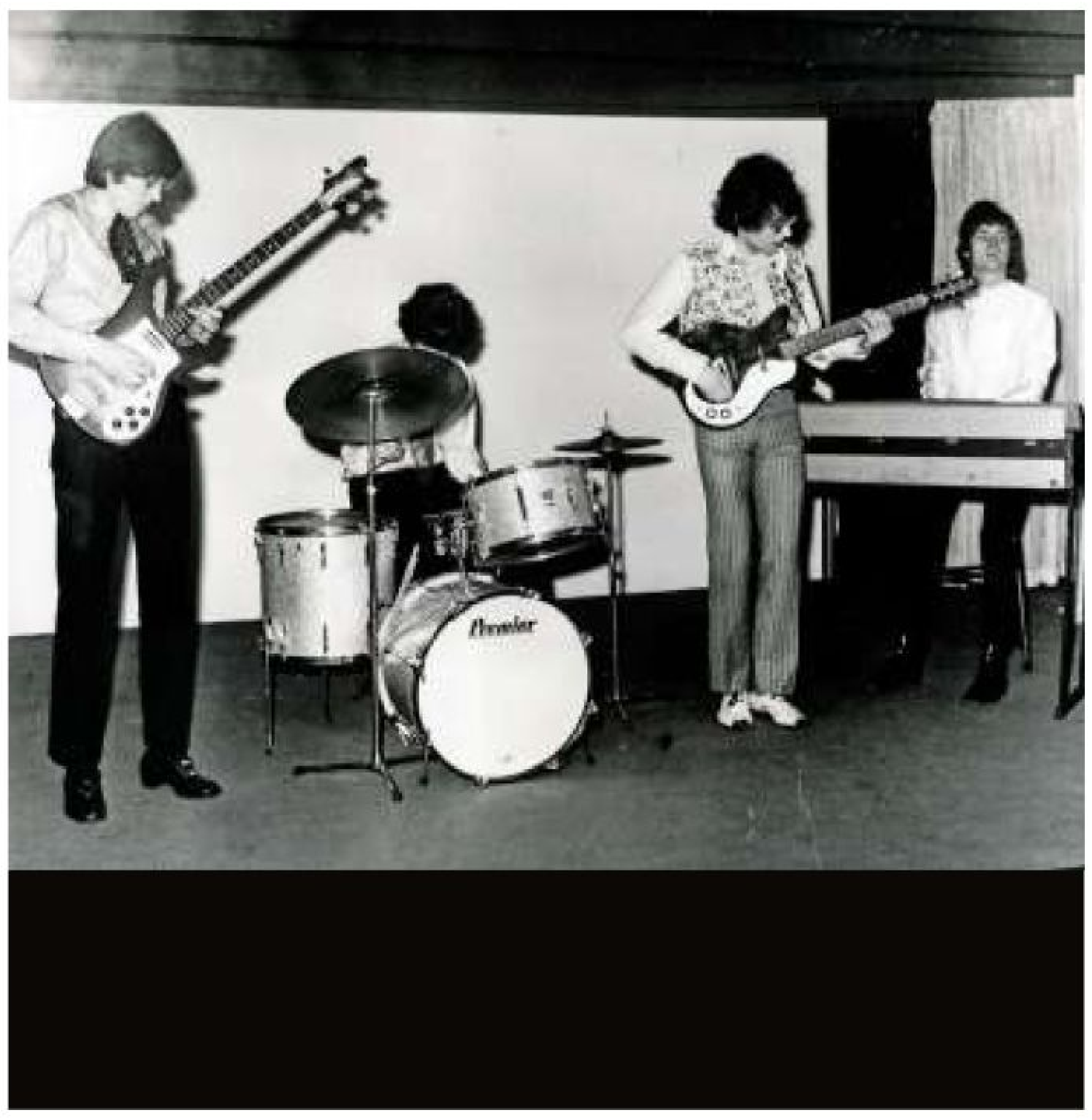
Syd's inspired, enchanting songs, narcotic nursery rhymes and fairy tales set in sound were often deceptively complex. "The first thing that came into his head were the lyrics, and his next priority was making the words rhyme," recalled keyboard player Rick Wright. "He'd come up with a melody later, but never paid much attention to time signatures. Syd's songs were great, but the tempos were always changing. That made things quite difficult for the band."

At the outset, then, The Pink Floyd were doing things differently. Norman Smith, the staff producer who'd served his apprenticeship engineering Beatles sessions, had his work cut out recording *Piper…*, between February and June 1967. "I think Norman was hoping we'd go the Beatles route," Mason said "and produce a 'pop' album – terrible word! Perhaps we did too."

Though lacking some of the production finesse of *Sgt. Pepper, The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* was wilder, more whimsical and weirder than The Beatles' flower power masterpiece. Nevertheless, there's a second, important dimension to Mason's analogy.

"Syd was influenced by John Lennon's resentment of the pop machine," said Mason. "Even before his problems became obvious, Syd was already indicating that he wanted to do things differently."

"I liked Syd's attitude," added Wright. "If someone said, 'You can't do that,' he'd be the first to say, 'So what? We're doing it our way.' None of us were desperate to be pop stars. Fuck that. That was the whole point of the light show. It was the norm in those days that stages would be lit so audiences could see the lead singer. When we performed, you couldn't really see anybody. We liked to hide."



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"AT FIRST THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION THAT SYD DIDN'T WANT TO BE A POP STAR."
NICK MASON

IN 1967, RICK WRIGHT WAS PINK Floyd's second singer, second songwriter, and virtually neck and neck with Barrett in the ace face department. His Hammer Horror-style Farfisa Duo organ sound and bewitching Eastern scales did much to define the early Pink Floyd sound. In 2007, sadly just a year before his death from cancer, the 63-year-old Wright cut a wary ➢

◄ and somewhat lonely figure in his tidy if sparse office in a quiet mews in west London. "I'm afraid I've got nothing to offer you," he apologised, after half a handshake, "but you're welcome to share some of this," pointing at a bottle of water on the table between us.

"MY TECHNIQUE IS COMPLETELY WRONG. I CAN'T PLAY A SCALE THE WAY YOU'RE MEANT TO."
RICK WRIGHT

Unlike Roger Waters, Rick had recently listened to *Piper…* again: "I don't think I'd played the album since its release, and I was pleasantly surprised. Much better than how I remembered it."

Also in contrast to Waters, Wright remembered a state of "absolute excitement" when making the record. His only disappointment was hearing Pow R Toc H again: "I'd forgotten about that one. Never did like those silly voices at the start of that song." That it should have slipped his mind is surprising, given that the instrumental once considered a sequel to Interstellar Overdrive is driven by Wright's Dave Brubeck-on-acid piano part.

Wright took his music seriously and, evidently, much else too. Not for nothing did Nick Mason write in his Floyd memoir, Inside Out, that Wright spends his time "thinking about thinking".

Was he always that way? "I guess so. I mean, I will go and sit at my piano and play all this rather sad-sounding stuff. That's what I've always done. But I think Roger is melancholic too, in a sense, besides his obvious anger about the war. Even David [Gilmour] is."

Rick, though, was the only group member to tell MOJO his instrument was "my best friend", and though he quickly backtracked, it was clear music was a solace and a form of therapy for him: "I know that if you get really angry or frustrated, people say, 'Go and scream in a pillow, or see a counsellor or psychiatrist.' But I head for my piano."

By 2007, Wright had been doing that for the best part of 60 years, ever since teaching himself to play aged four on the family upright. "I was fascinated by the piano. I'd hit notes and work out the chords myself. Nobody told me where to put the fingers. I went where it felt right. Of course, my technique is completely wrong. I still can't play a scale in the way that you're meant to play it."

Given a second chance, he would opt for correct technique so he could sit legitimately at "a wonderful Steinway" and become a concert pianist. Fortunately for Pink Floyd, he brought his little idiosyncrasies to the world of mid-'60s pop.

With a good head of silver hair, Wright hadn't changed much since the *Dark Side…* days, a fact confirmed by a classic '70s-era portrait of himself in a frame in his otherwise memento-free room.

Perhaps it was all those sailing holidays in the Mediterranean, his preferred pursuit ever since he took off to Greece in the mid-'60s after a run-in with his college authorities. In fact, there was always something fitting about Wright drifting aimlessly under the fat old Aegean sun. And not just because he was a self-confessed "lazy bastard", his way of explaining his dramatic descent down the Floyd pecking order at the end of the '70s. Think of Echoes on *Meddle*, for example, a pivotal track that closed the door on acid whimsy and began the most cherished chapter in Floyd's career.

It was Wright's repeated, sub-aquatic, Leslie speaker-enhanced note that launched the piece, and his subtle chord progressions that gave it much of its oceanic power. "What Rick really does best is colour washes," explained Nick Mason. "And that's an important part of what makes Pink Floyd unique."

Unlike Syd ("a jack the lad, bopping around and getting all the pretty girls," according to Waters), Rick Wright was always notoriously uptight. "I mean, we used to share a flat together in the early days," Waters continued, "and he used to lock his fucking cornflakes up in a cupboard with a padlock! How could there not be tension?"

In turn, jazz buff Wright would be frustrated by his colleague's apparent lack of musicality. When Waters' bass needed tuning, which it often did during Pink Floyd's early days, the London College of Music undergraduate was invariably there to sort it out. "I hated things being out of tune," he said, confirming his status as the only band member with anything remotely like musical training.

DOMICILED IN NEW YORK, AS HE had been for many years by 2007, Roger Waters was the only one of Pink Floyd unable to show the whites of his eyes for this piece. Down a transatlantic phone line, His Master's Voice rings out loud and clear, as animated and intractable as it no doubt was in 1982 when he banished his bandmates from sessions for *The Final Cut*, the album that closed the curtain on Waters' association with the group.

During his conversation with MOJO, Waters would occasionally say, "OK, I'll give you that one," as if an interview is a kind of duel. But he was far more likely to ram your questions back down your throat.

"Exploratory and free-form!" he exclaims. "Not *Piper…*! Apart from Interstellar Overdrive, everything else on it was ordinary." "No," he answers another time. Next question. "No idea." The band played some 200 gigs during '67… "I don't know about that."

OK, let's switch to safer ground. How aware was Syd that he was an outsider? "Um." A long pause. "What do you *mean*? He wasn't an outsider. Why do you think he was an outsider? He was one of the beautiful people. He was inside it all. Why do you think he was an outsider? I find that very strange…"

Waters was the big bad wolf of Pink Floyd who huffed and puffed so much that his three little pigs eventually exacted sweet revenge by scarpering off with the band name, and proving to be at least as successful without him. Whether he was legitimately "the creative genius behind Pink Floyd" was hotly contested by the remaining members, but there's a big question over whether the band would have successfully outgrown their *Piper…* apprenticeship without his drive and determination. A rock'n'roll Ingmar Bergman with teeth bared, the bleak, all-too-human Waters wore his inferiority complex about his embryonic musical skills with pride.

"No, I never learned," he said, starting his answer with a characteristic rebuttal. "I still don't consider myself a musician in that sense." Yet Waters proudly recounted, in some detail, jamming in the studio with Eric Clapton while recording his first post-Floyd album, 1984's *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*. "And this came up, my sense of inadequacy in terms of playing an instrument. And Clapton said, 'Stop right there! You're a great player, and don't let anyone ever tell you any different.' That changed my life to some extent, 'cos this guy really is a proper player."

Waters' sensitivity was especially acute because the Floyd came of age at a time when technique was starting to become king. "There was this 'putting-me-down' thing later on in the Floyd. 'He's tone deaf,' that kind of thing. A lot of that was because I was writing everything and making all the decisions, all that crap."

According to Waters, "all that crap" began as soon as Barrett went, early in 1968. The others insist the bassist-turned-ideas-man's apparent coup took place sometime between the mid-'70s (Wright) and *The Final Cut* (Mason). But what's particularly intriguing, ➤

Getty, Rex

Any colour you like: Rick Wright, Hampstead, and (opposite) with Pink Floyd in the first flush of stardom, summer 1967.

Biding my time: Roger Waters, Hampstead, July 1967 and (opposite) Syd Barrett in summer '67.

especially in light of subsequent events, is the relationship that existed between Waters and Barrett at the dawn of Pink Floyd.

“I wasn’t in the band then so what sort of relationship they had I really don’t know,” shrugged David Gilmour guardedly, before rethinking his reply. “But I must say it’s hard to imagine Roger deferring to Syd, not least because when Syd was 20, Roger was 22, which is a big gap at that age.”

Deference and diplomacy are not key Waters characteristics. But while his words can look harsh on paper, there was something compulsive and good-spirited about his combativeness. “He was writing songs!” gasped the mock-exasperated bassist, on the subject of his relationship with Syd. “Don’t you know enough about rock’n’roll yet to know that’s the only thing that matters in a band? Have you or have you not got a songwriter and/or somebody with charisma, or who’s got something to say, or somebody with a direction? The songwriting is what it hinges on, and having something to say. And Syd had a lot to say.”

“In terms of musical input, you would call Syd the leader, definitely,” confirmed Wright. “But he wasn’t a leader at all. We all had a role to play, but I don’t think there was a leader at that time.”

“Syd was the leader,” Nick Mason says, “but he was a very relaxed leader. There was no sense of anyone dictating. Syd would bring an idea or a song and let us do whatever we felt was suitable.”

Mason also believed that forming the nucleus of the band while he, Waters and Wright were architecture students at Regent Street Polytechnic gave the future Floyd a particular bond; though not necessarily all good vibrations, of course. Even as far back as 1963, when he and Waters first met, Mason remembered his colleague being “rather menacing and sporting an expression of scorn”.

The fact that Waters was deeply affected by the death of the father he never knew has been widely documented. From war-wounded Corporal Clegg on 1968’s *A Saucerful Of Secrets* to *The Final Cut*, which he dedicated to his communist, pacifist parent killed in action in 1944, Waters has written extensively about the big themes – war, authority, institutions – that relate to his childhood trauma.

Less known is the fact that, despite the progressive politics (Roger was a CND activist at 15), his family background was, according to his mother in a rare 1990 interview, “unmusical and not very creative”. This might help explain the plain-speaking sense of mistrust that underpins Waters’ attitude towards *Piper*-era Floyd. Certainly, his view of that time is that of a brutal pragmatist: “Well, we weren’t riding very high. I was making about fucking six quid a week. It wasn’t a very high ride, trust me.”

Wasn’t what you were doing more important than money? “No, absolutely not! No, no, no, my God…”

Indeed, fiscal matters were clearly an issue for the bassist even back then, and he took great delight in recalling every last detail of his pay packet as a trainee architect. “I was making £1,100 a year, so every week I got £22 in a brown envelope less deductions. I had to make a living. If music hadn’t worked out, I might have gone into smuggling or property development, something more rewarding than architecture, anyway, which I never really enjoyed.”

“I NEVER EVER FELT LET DOWN BY SYD BARRETT. HE WAS JUST ILL.”
ROGER WATERS

Getty (2)

WATERS HAD AT LEAST ONE good reason to make Pink Floyd a success. The immediate problem was how. With Barrett writing the songs, Waters’ role was more that of a cheerleader than a leader per se. “I provided a little mettle,” he said. “Ambition, backbone, steel, whatever you want to call it. You need all kinds of things in a band to keep it moving forward, and in that incarnation maybe Syd and I were the driving forces.”

Despite never quite getting the hang of tuning his bass guitar, Waters was hardly silent on creative matters. Though often regarded as the black sheep on *Piper*…, even by the band, his Take Up Thy Stethoscope And Walk was the only non-Barrett or group composition on the record.

Though it admittedly lacks songwriting craft, the extended jam that breaks in after one verse is a perfect vehicle for some magnificent sparring between Wright’s mad organ-grinding and Barrett’s guitar frenzy. Waters, as usual, plays the part of the Rickenbacker-belting bassist.

But as the track reaches its excitable, Big Top-style finale, the fledgling songwriter lets slip that he might have been having more fun than he now cares to remember. The impassioned cry, “Music seems to help the pain/Seems to cultivate the brain/I’m alive!”, hardly sounds like the raving of an opportunistic, non-committal pop passenger.

Being “alive!” in ’67 meant, at least for a significant minority of pop enthusiasts, testing the limits of artistic licence and commercial acceptance. The least skilled musician in the band, Waters also seemed the keenest to find ways to extend the boundaries of pop.

“Yes, I spent hours and hours in a ghastly cold basement off the Harrow Road making quadraphonic tapes for [May ’67’s] Games For May concert,” he confessed. “I also remember following clockwork toy cars across the stage with a microphone which was, I suppose, playing around with notions of what music is. Now my feeling is that pushing a toy car across a stage and following it with a microphone is a joke, and has absolutely nothing to do with music at all.”

Years later, of course, Waters would work with teams of non-musicians in his successful quest to transform Pink Floyd from a “lights-and-sound” combo into a vast, travelling theatrical spectacle with added rock’n’roll. Some might argue that, say, Interstellar Overdrive, the 10-minute centrepiece of both *Piper*… and the band’s set from late ’66 until the end of the decade, has more to do with music than the big stage shows embraced by the Floyd during the ’70s.

After reminding Waters that he once described the piece as “beautiful”, he snorted. Mention the dreaded phrase “avant-garde” and he became positively icy.

“Nah! Bollocks!” he protested. “I hated Stockhausen and all that – thought it was absolute nonsense. I always felt much more connected to The Rolling Stones, The Beatles and The Who than I did to any of that stuff.”

Neither pure pop nor po-faced provocateurs, Pink Floyd found themselves in an uncomfortable no-man’s land. But with buzz words such as “psychedelic” and “far-out” bandied about, there was a big enough audience to keep the genre-busting band in business. And no one, not The Soft Machine in London nor the underground bands from hippie central San Francisco, was cooking up the electronic storm that defined the ’66-into-’67 Floyd concert mindblower.

From behind his drum kit, Nick Mason was perfectly placed to observe what was going on. And as the man charged with holding it all together, while Barrett and Wright oscillated into freak-out heaven, Mason has a clear explanation of the Floyd’s musical metier.

“Quite early on, we’d discovered the possibilities of musical dynamics,” he says, “the fact that not everything was played flat out, either in terms of speed or volume. That immediately gave people the impression that we were doing something a bit sophisticated. Actually, it wasn't very complicated at all, but it appeared that way because no one else was doing it."

"NONE OF US BELIEVED IN HIPPIE CONCEPTS. WE WERE HEADING DOWN THIS DARKER ROAD."
NICK MASON

EMI
Columbia
STEREO
soundtrack from the film
MORE
played and composed by the pink floyd

NICK MASON HAS ALWAYS BEEN a bit of a misfit in Pink Floyd. And never more so than in 1967 when the rosy-cheeked non-smoker in the purple pullover seemed so oddly normal in a group that sounded so strangely strange.

In 2007, as he ambled across his giant warehouse space in a nondescript part of north London, you half expected him to whip out a set of accounts to sign. So it was a relief when he started talking about the "mortification" the band felt when pianist Alan Price took a cheap shot at Pink Floyd and their newfangled music from the Albert Hall stage late in 1966. Price hit the reverb on his Hammond organ and joked: "This is psychedelic music!"

"We felt very vulnerable to criticism," Mason admitted. "I'm nearly over it! In all honesty, psychedelia had been a bloody good launch pad, but it was not something we felt comfortable with. It was tied in with all these hippy concepts – love, crystals and all the rest of it. Whereas we were heading down this darker road, towards *Dark Side*..., which is a very technical piece about much more introverted ideas. It was important that we lose the 'tripping-on-acid' image."

Mason had an instinctive distrust of the counter-culture, but he wasn't alone. "Yes, hippies used to be a large part of our audience," Wright agreed, "but I don't think even Syd or I were hippies. None of us believed in the hippie philosophy. We were part of a wider movement that was all about freedom. And freedom for me meant, Wow, we can actually go on stage and make these weird sounds, and people are gonna listen and pay you for it! And the record company are prepared to give us a deal. And our managers believe in it, they're flying us first class to America. That was the freedom. When you're 24 and still learning about life, that's pretty exciting."

"It was that eye-of-the-storm thing," Mason added. "Though we were apparently at the centre of it all, we didn't entirely understand it. What we did understand was that to be successful, you couldn't go on complaining about the suits, man, for too long. That's the way of the world. And that's hardly surprising when you've got a record company desperate for you to do something, and you've got a public who really aren't that interested in poetry readings." Or in the musical qualities of a wind-up toy car...

Mason thought the band was "torn between two cravings, between the hard sell and total success, and the belief that actually we liked a little bit of the intellectual high ground." Which is where the Blackhill Enterprises management team of Peter Jenner and Andrew King came in.

"They were the ones that were really pushing the boundaries," said Waters, "getting us concerts in seated venues as well as on the old Top Rank pop circuit. It was probably because they were good, middle-class vicars' sons with degrees from good universities, that meant the world of classical music promotion was prepared to take them seriously. And we were prepared to engage in that."

If, as Waters insisted, the Floyd weren't as detached from the pop mainstream as their reputation suggests, then the band were united in their belief that the business itself was less than savoury.

"It was totally corrupt when we started," Wright maintained. "The club owners, the agents, virtually all of them were absolute crooks. We were lucky that Jenner and King weren't like that. But I remember going to our publisher's office and telling him, Look, we're playing these gigs and we haven't got any money to live on. And he'd have a fit about giving us a fiver. Things like that made us determined not to play the usual pop game."

"Part of it was also snobbery," admitted Mason. But as the Floyd walked through the Abbey Road studio doors on February 21, just as Cliff Richard, The Beatles and The Goons had done before them, the drummer felt both excited and uneasy.

"When you're doing something that's supposedly radical," he said, "you can feel a bit self-conscious about it, that somehow you're getting away with it. And it didn't help when one reviewer said it sounded a bit like Acker Bilk in a Persian market. Actually, when I listen to parts of *Piper*... now, I can say, 'Yeah, it does a bit!'"

NO ONE EMBODIED PINK FLOYD'S confused attitude towards their work and circumstances more than Syd Barrett. The Floyd frontman, who died in 2006 aged 60, was the member whose destiny it was to stall at the gates and remain forever entwined with the psychedelic experience. For the rest of the band, living with his legend has been both an inspiration and an albatross.

After work on *Piper*... had finished, Barrett's songwriting took a seriously weird twist, with Jugband Blues, in particular, reflecting his personal collapse. So too did his behaviour. Whether it was drugs, disillusionment, or a serious attempt to make "Acker Bilk in a Persian market" appear normal by comparison, no one will ever know. What is certain is that, by the end of 1967, Barrett was no longer Pink Floyd's gifted golden boy.

"I said to Peter and Andrew, 'OK this can't go on,'" said Waters. "Syd obviously can't perform live. Perhaps he could become our Brian Wilson figure, keep writing the songs and turn up at recording sessions. They said, 'No, Syd wants two girl saxophone players in the group.' I went, Forget it! And that's how our ways parted. I never felt let down by him. He was just... ill."

Ill, not delivering the goods and hampering the band's chances of capitalising on their two hit singles earlier in '67. These facts have haunted Pink Floyd ever since, causing diverging opinions and differing levels of guilt at the same time. In his book, Nick Mason writes that the sacking of Syd was completely callous. "Well," said Waters. "He may have felt that. I didn't feel callous at all. I don't know what he's talking about." Nor does Waters think Barrett was aware of being phased out: "He'd ceased to have connections with all that stuff. He did turn up at one or two gigs thinking he was gonna play..."

When Pink Floyd played central London's hippy hangout Middle Earth in spring 1968, Barrett spent the gig in front of the stage staring at the man who'd replaced him, his Cambridge buddy David Gilmour. Seven years later, completely out of the blue, Barrett turned up at Abbey Road to visit his former colleagues. By a weird twist of fate, the band were recording the vocals to Shine On You Crazy Diamond, Waters's partial tribute to their benign ex-leader who'd recently become a cult thanks to the reissue of *Piper*... and his two solo albums, and a legend-creating tribute by Nick Kent in New Musical Express. This time, though, it was Syd himself who was the object of squint-eyed fascination.

"I had to be told it was Syd," recalled Rick Wright. "It was extremely emotional. I nearly burst into tears. He'd shaved off all his body hair, including his eyebrows and was about 20 stone. He kept jumping up, brushing his teeth with a toothbrush, then sitting down again. I couldn't really work after that."

Getty, Rex

The grand vizier: Nick Mason, Hampstead, July 1967 and (opposite) with 'new boy' David Gilmour (third left) in Pink Floyd, 1969.

Shortly afterwards, Wright began to plummet under the weight of his own problems, and history repeated itself. “I hadn’t offered any material for [1977’s] *Animals*, and Roger and I were having disagreements about all sorts of things,” he explained. “He was on his ego trip, had written *The Wall* virtually on his own.”

Midway through sessions for that album, in summer 1979, Waters fired him. “Even back in architecture school there had been some weird tension between us,” said Wright. “He was a bully, and I was extremely upset and angry when it happened. It was totally unfair the way it was done.” The darkness, again illuminated by twilight talk of drug use and creative inertia, had returned.

“There comes a time,” explained David Gilmour in 2007, “when this juggernaut is moving through time and you find you haven’t got the patience to be nice enough to those who can’t quite pull their weight. Rick lost his confidence, and definitely got bullied and pushed aside a fair bit – by me, as well as other people.”

Within months, Wright was back in the band for *The Wall* tour – albeit on a wage. Five years later, in December 1985, Roger Waters declared Pink Floyd a “spent force” and announced his own departure. 1987 saw Gilmour, with minimal input from Wright and Mason, resurrecting the band name for *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*. After a couple of lucrative tours, the group was dormant between 1995 and 2014’s *The Endless River* – save for a brief reunion of the post-Barrett quartet at Live 8 show in 2005.

A further attempt to bring all four together for 2007’s Madcap’s Last Laugh, an all-star tribute to Barrett at the Barbican, foundered because Waters had to pick his wife up from the airport, leaving Gilmour, Wright and Mason to play Arnold Layne without him.

Days after Live 8, sales of Pink Floyd CDs went through the roof. But it was the albums they released between 1973 and 1979 – *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, *Wish You Were Here*, *Animals* and *The Wall* – that people shelled out for.

From the brink of acid-induced catastrophe, Pink Floyd had – in a phrase used by three of the four members during interviews – “ploughed their own furrow” and emerged triumphant, above and beyond their progressive rock contemporaries. The catalyst for this reversal of fortunes, where all the fear and loathing was skilfully channelled into a series of high-gloss art-rock records, was an ex-male model and cover band guitarist.

IN 2007, DAVID GILMOUR APPEARED TO BE THE happiest member of Pink Floyd. A bon vivant with a warm, impressive presence and a remarkably big family, many of whom still lived with him in a spacious Sussex farmhouse, he had a generous spirit, a CBE for his charity work, and the manner of a man who wears his achievements with quiet dignity.

Barefooted in blue jeans and shirt, he took MOJO across the gravel drive to his studio, picks up one of his many Gibsons, Guilds and Gretsches and inquired: “Do you play?”

Yet David Gilmour was, one sensed, no less haunted than Waters when it came to shouldering the Barrett burden. Syd’s death had, if anything, added to it.

“I now have this lasting regret that I was so obedient to the family’s wishes not to disturb his peace,” he said in 2007. “A few years ago, my wife Polly said to me, ‘How would you feel if he dies?’ I said, ‘Regretful, probably.’ And I am. I should have gone down there, knocked on his door and said, ‘Hey, let’s go for a pint.’ Because we were friends. I can’t see that seeing an old friend would have done any damage.”

As his guitar-sparring partner at college, and companion on a busking trip to the south of France, Gilmour was closer to Barrett than any of Syd’s original band-mates. Unlike the others, who only acknowledged Barrett’s deterioration after a mysterious, possible acid-induced breakdown in July 1967, Gilmour saw a marked difference in his friend two months earlier when he dropped in on the See Emily Play recording session.

“Syd had these rather glazed, staring eyes, and he didn’t seem very pleased to see me,” he recalled. “It was a strange moment. I felt something had already changed within him quite deeply.”

By Christmas 1967, Gilmour had been invited to join the band, initially to cover for the errant Barrett on stage. But by February 1968, it was obvious that he was a bona fide replacement; the idea of a five-piece Floyd stymied by Syd’s inability to communicate.

“I wasn’t there when the switch was flicked and Syd was gone,” said Gilmour. And yet, in another respect, he was. On January 26, 1968, the band set off on a 70-mile journey to a gig at Southampton University, and were driving past Richmond where Barrett was living at the time. “What about Syd?” said someone. “Let’s not bother,” said another voice, reported to have been Waters’. Gilmour was in; Barrett down and out.

After that, Gilmour worked tirelessly on Barrett’s behalf – joining the dots on his two solo albums, playing bass for Syd at his potty solo performance at the Olympia, Kensington in 1970, and making sure Barrett received his royalties. After Syd’s death,Gilmour performed Dark Globe on his solo tour. It’s a haunting song that Waters singles out as a key cut in Syd’s desperately short canon. “That’s the one that represents it most strongly for me,” said Waters, “that expresses his inability to cope so eloquently.”

“Yes. He liked that,” said Gilmour. “Roger has many, many good points and many talents, but he’s a very alpha male sort of person. Right from the start, his caustic wit and put-downs were in evidence, if mostly in a jocular sort of way. It felt quite odd, and obviously created all sorts of problems as the years went on.

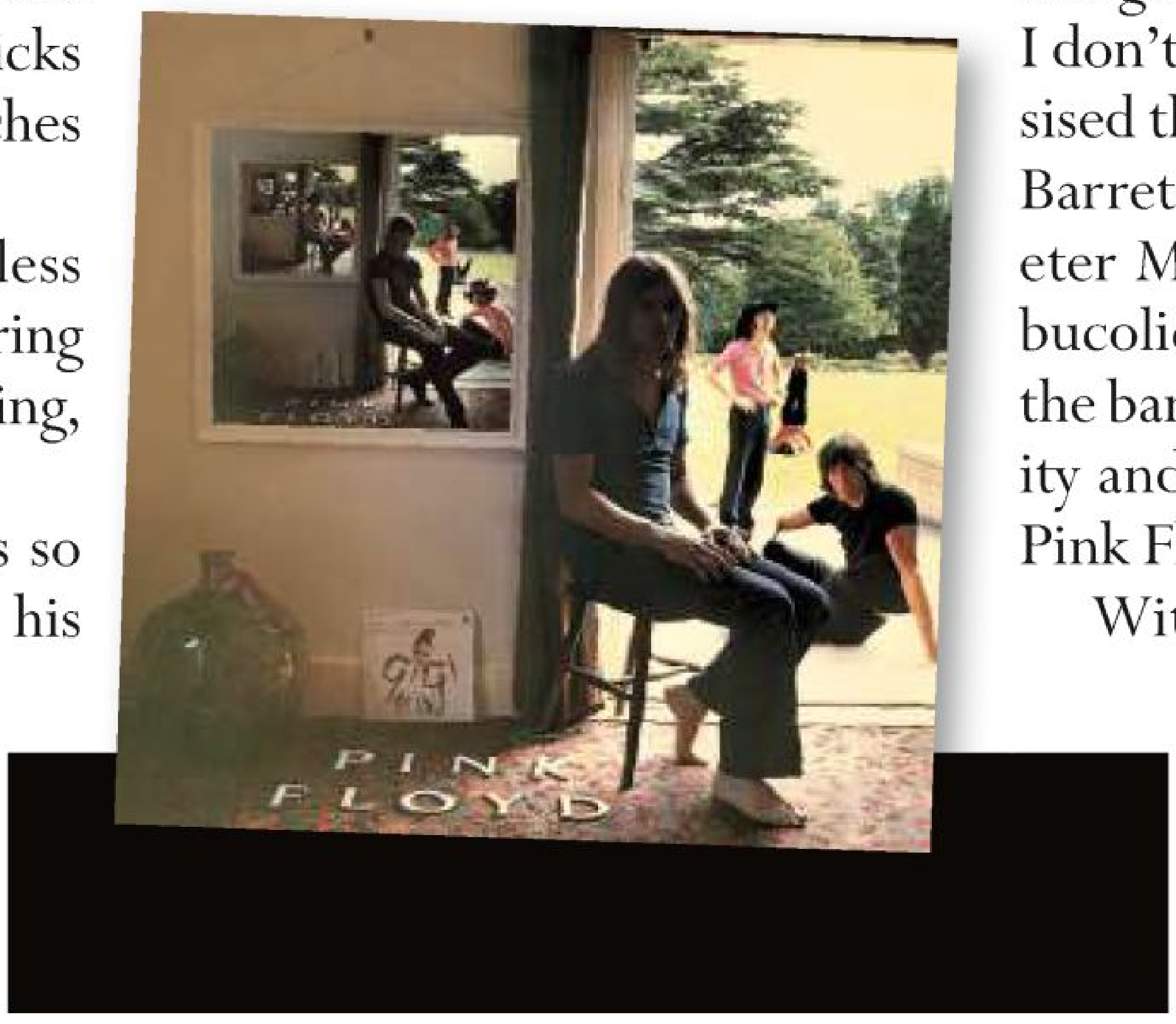
“I’m sure the band found the thought of losing Syd completely scary, but given the state of him there was absolutely no alternative,” he continued, before remembering his awkward first few months with the Floyd. “I’d been in a group that played Beach Boys songs, Tamla Motown and Beatles covers, so I was used to singing in other people’s voices and copying other guitar styles. But Syd had been my friend at Cambridge Tech, where we’d swap guitar tips and he’d covet my Binson Echorec [echo unit]. We also spent one summer busking around France together. Obviously, I felt both shy and nervous about replacing him. Apparently, I spent a lot of 1968 with my back to the audience.”

That wasn’t such a bad move, given Pink Floyd’s reputation for shyness. “It was well deserved,” agreed Gilmour. “We were a very closed off, insular little unit. We didn’t socialise much with other musicians. We were happy keeping to ourselves.”

Was that a case of Cambridge boys finding themselves adrift in a large and largely unwelcoming city, perhaps? “No, I don’t think so,” he replied, though Waters emphasised that Cambridge persisted in the group’s work: Barrett’s Bike for example, and his own Grantchester Meadows on *Ummagumma*. “There’s a lot of bucolic sketching of the life of a young person on the banks of the River Cam discovering their sexuality and intellectuality and individuality in the ’60s Pink Floyd,” he offered.

With the trauma of Syd Barrett’s departure behind them, the new guitarist’s early years with the band were spent finding his own musical identity. In the absence of a songwriter, that’s what his colleagues were doing too, which is why half of both 1969’s *Ummagumma* and 1970’s *Atom Heart Mother* were given over to solo exploits.

Although both benefited commercially from the growth of the new, album-orientated progressive market, no one in the band spoke too fondly of either record in 2007. “There was quite a long period when I think we were a little lost,” Gilmour admitted.



“SYD WAS MY FRIEND, AND I FELT SHY AND NERVOUS ABOUT REPLACING HIM.”
DAVID GILMOUR

Comfortably glum?:
Pink Floyd, circa 1969 (from left) David Gilmour, Nick Mason, Roger Waters, Rick Wright.

While the band struggled to find a new musical language, their most tigerish member managed to discover the benefits of catharsis.

"Roger was incredibly driven by this point, it's true," said Nick Mason, "but I wasn't aware of him having a particular vision of where he wanted to go just yet." One blood-curdlingly loud "AAAAAARRGH!" midway through Careful With That Axe, Eugene suggested he was preparing the way for bigger noises up ahead.

"I might still have been shy then, but Roger had certainly taken to leaping around, thrashing his bass and gurning a bit," Gilmour recalled. "Then there was the dramatic striking of the gong and the screaming in Careful With That Axe…. Roger had discovered letting his pain out. I know John Lennon did that whole Arthur 'Primal Scream' Janov album, which Roger was very keen on, but he was screaming long before Lennon ever got to Janov."

WHILE WATERS WAS EXORCISING HIS CHILDHOOD pain, Gilmour and Wright struck up a musical partnership that spoke of their own, more subdued emotions: Wright's melancholia and Gilmour's quest for melodic bliss.

Over several months in the first half of 1971, everything came together on a long, serene and deeply moving piece. "Echoes marked a real moment of clarity," said Gilmour, "the moment when we all realised we were getting somewhere, finding a direction. And Rick, who in many ways is the soul of Pink Floyd, was as much a part of that as anybody. If you're looking at who wrote what, I'd say that 80 per cent of the music on Echoes is either mine or Rick's."

Twenty-three minutes of pure Floydian bliss, Echoes is spatial rather than space-rock and remarkably similar in mood to Hendrix's equally aquatic 1983 (A Merman I Should Turn To Be) from *Electric Ladyland*.

"Because I'd not been taught properly, I was simply unable to play fast," recalled Rick Wright. "But I didn't have a problem with that because one of the best things I've ever heard from a musician was Miles Davis, who said it's not the notes that matter, it's the spaces in between. I've always felt that, it's always how I play. You only need to play two notes: the important thing is to discover what's happening between them. That to me is feeling, and feeling is tremendously important in music."

Photoshoot

"Rick's never been given the credit he deserves and that has to do with his own personal strength, or indeed his lack of it," said Gilmour. "His importance in Pink Floyd was inestimable."

Waters agreed: "Rick had a hugely significant musical impact on the later work, such as *Dark Side…* and *Wish You Were Here*. His chord structures became big important bits on the big, big pieces of work." Both men would reiterate these opinions following Wright's death.

If the combination of Wright's innate despondency and Gilmour's haunting style finally delivered the quintessential Pink Floyd sound, Echoes also marked the moment Waters discovered the art of lyric-writing. "I found my niche on Echoes," he said, "the central theme which runs through all my work, which is that human beings have the potential to recognise themselves in others – and in consequence of that recognition to have empathy with others."

"At that moment, we all had the same objectives," said Gilmour. "As for those deeper philosophical and political differences, you just stick 'em on the side at that point in your life. The collective ambition is more important." Until, of course, everyone reverts to type.

As we wrap up chez Gilmour, the guitarist turns and says, "You know, as a father of eight children, I've learnt that people don't actually change very much."

With those words in mind, Pink Floyd's first press biog from February 1967 makes interesting reading. Nick Mason doesn't like "nasty people and unpleasant circumstances". Rick Wright enjoys Beethoven. Syd Barrett dislikes "having no time for reading fairy stories". And Roger Waters? He prefers "lying in bed, sunshine, Chelsea buns, very large motor cars and science fiction novels, but dislikes almost everything else".

Little wonder, the legacy of *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn* has resounded so loudly and with such frequency down the years. Not least of all among the band members themselves.

SYD'S 1967 *Turn over for a month-by-month account of the year that changed Syd Barrett for ever.*

67

ROGER 'SYD' BARRETT

started 1967 as British psychedelia's Pied Piper – 12 months later he was an unrecognisable acid casualty. But what really happened? **MARK BLAKE** *presents a month-by-month analysis of Barrett's breakdown by those who witnessed it…*

SYD BARRETT BEGAN 1967 ON A HIGH. HE HAD just turned 21, and The Pink Floyd were about to sign a record deal. Barrett had left his hometown of Cambridge for London three years earlier, enrolling at Camberwell College of Art, with his bandmates attending Regent Street Polytechnic, where they would remain until the group turned professional. A precocious teenager, since the premature death of his father, Barrett was indulged by his mother and grew up in a world where his good looks, singular dress sense and individual take on life gave him a magnetic quality. There's a common theme to the memories of those who knew him back then: that *everyone* wanted to be around Syd.

At the end of 1966, Syd was living in a flat at 2 Earlham Street, near London's Covent Garden, enjoying a spell of contentment and creativity: writing some of the songs that would end up on *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, listening to The Beatles' *Revolver*, smoking Lebanese hash, and squiring his girlfriend, Lindsay Corner – among other female admirers – around town.

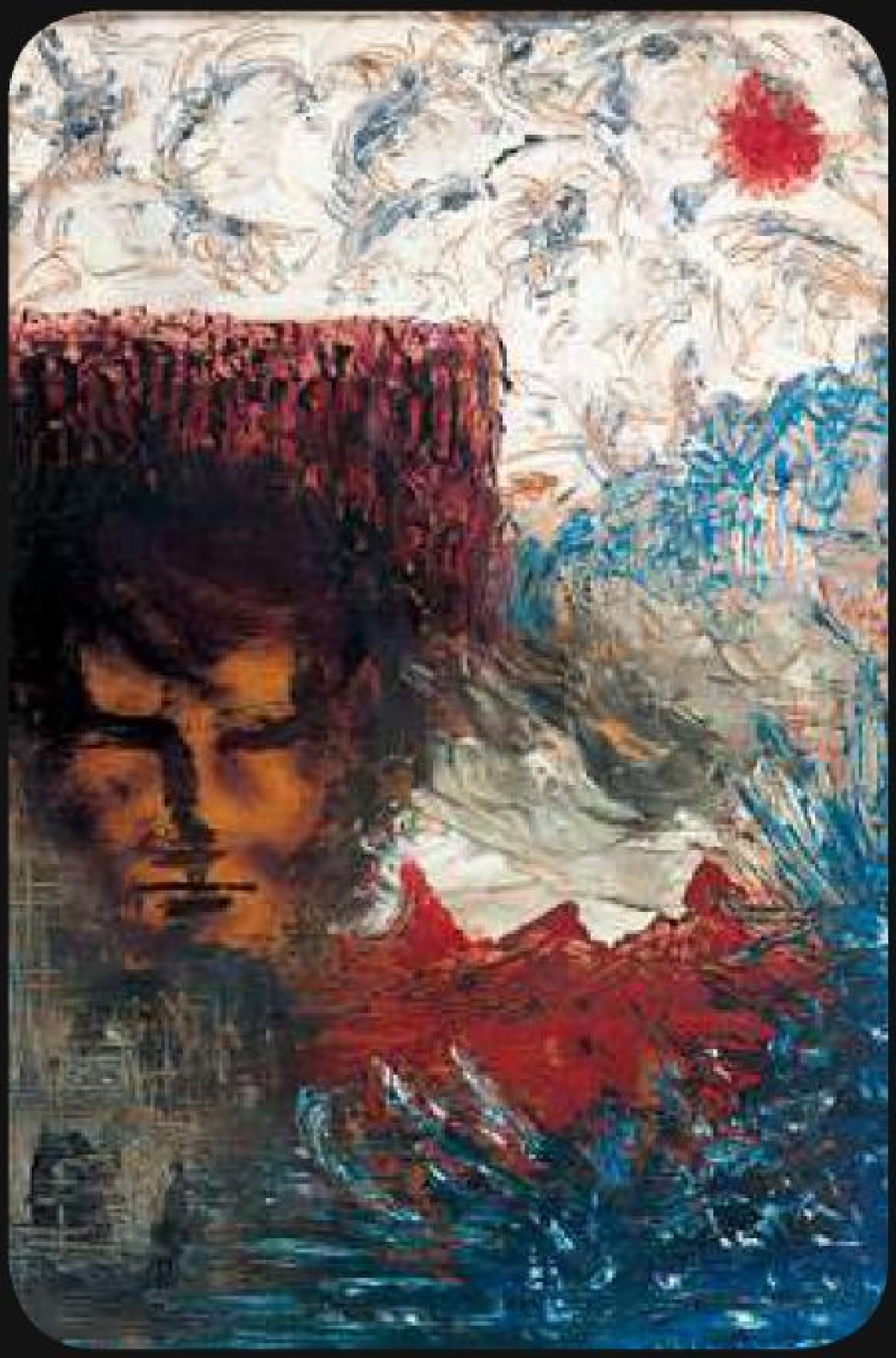
Before 1966 was out, Pink Floyd had secured their first managers and a regular spot playing underground art, music and poetry events at Notting Hill's All Saints Hall and, later, the ultra-hip UFO club on London's Tottenham Court Road. Syd would begin 1967 with so many possibilities. Yet as the year unfolded, his life changed beyond all recognition…

Retna/Photoshot

JANUARY

On January 11 and 12, film-maker Peter Whitehead captured The Pink Floyd for Tonite Let's All Make Love In London (*pictured above*), a documentary about the hip, happening capital. Whitehead had paid for the band's studio time, and his camera lingers on Syd Barrett playing abstract, freestyle guitar on a version of Floyd's signature tune Interstellar Overdrive. It's the look and sound of The Pink Floyd months before the mainstream caught on. Hardly a novice when it came to drugs, Syd is thought to have first tried LSD in 1965, and dope two years before that. Yet he was by no means the hopeless drug casualty of popular myth.

London's underground arts scene would provide an easy conduit for drugs, and the ideal environment for Pink Floyd to play. For now, Barrett seemed in his element. With managers Peter Jenner and Andrew King eager to present their charges as more than just a pop group, the improvisational nature of Floyd's music was seen as a selling point. For Syd, it meant the freedom to create, to experiment. "I knew about the blues," recalls Andrew King, "and Pink Floyd just didn't sound right. But it was their musical inconsistencies, and Syd's magnetic performance that made it right."



FEBRUARY

On February 1, The Pink Floyd signed to EMI Records through its Head of A&R, Sidney Beecher-Stevens, for a then unheard-of £5,000 advance. "I always thought it was amazing that Syd and Roger's mothers were OK about them

In the pink: the Floyd celebrate signing to EMI for a £5,000 advance, Manchester Square, February 1, 1967; (left) Syd's art made for girlfriend Libby Gausden.

dropping out of school and out of a job," says Syd's former girlfriend Libby Gausden. "People just didn't do that back then. Roger was so far ahead he was actually going to be an architect." Some recall Barrett agonising over the decision to quit his course at the Camberwell School of Art, especially as he was so close to completion, while others, including Libby, believe art was something to fill his time before the chance arose to make music. But for Barrett, the struggle to balance his creativity with the pressure to sell records and concert tickets was about to begin. Floyd were soon trekking up and down the country, sometimes playing two gigs a night. "It would have been debilitating for anyone," offers the artist Duggie Fields who shared a flat with Syd in the '60s. "Never mind someone on drugs."

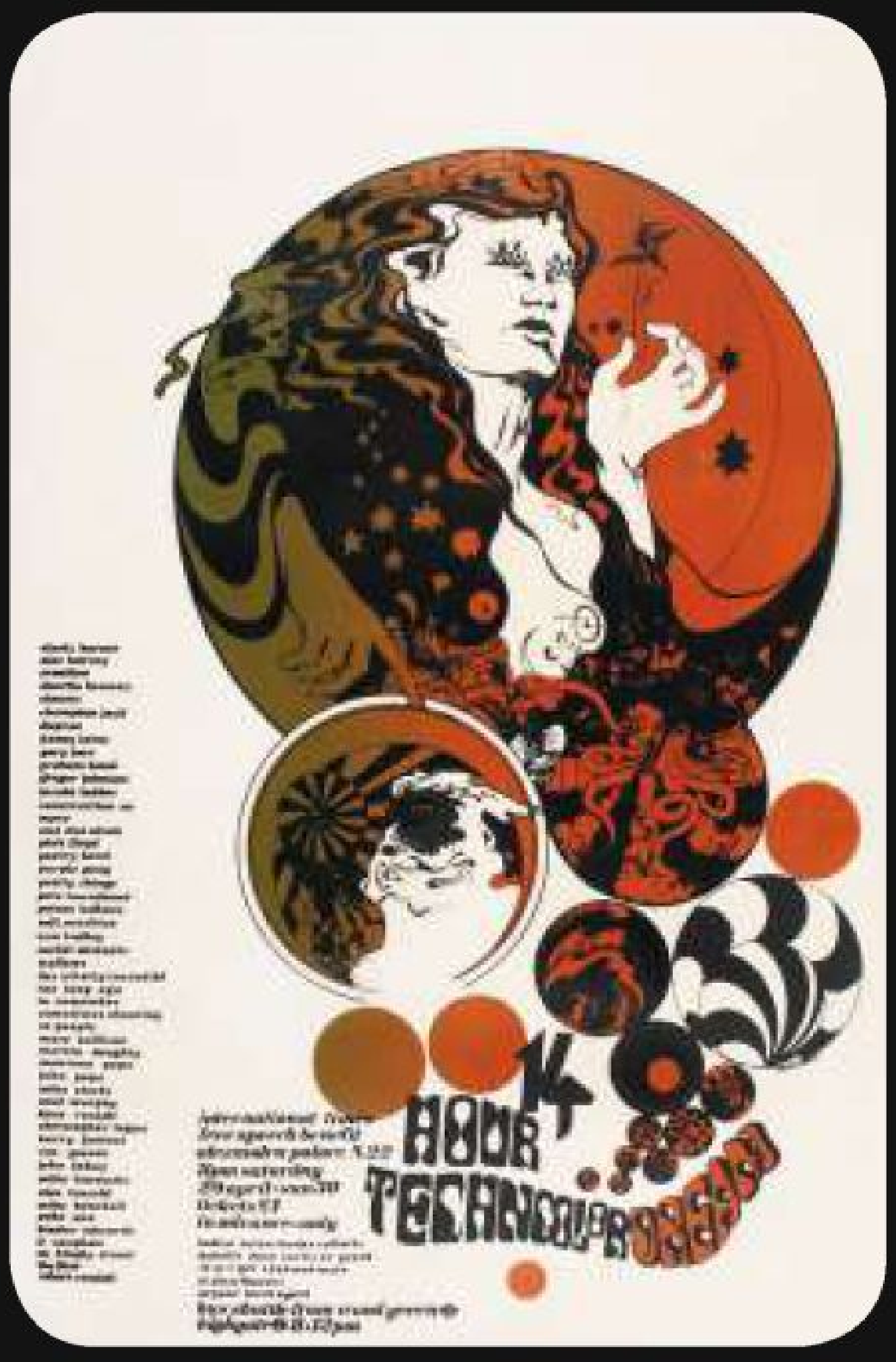
MARCH

For Syd, the excitement of recording Floyd's debut album, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, at Abbey Road studios (with The Beatles finishing *Sgt. Pepper* next door) was tempered by EMI's in-house producer Norman Smith. The band had begun work at Abbey Road the month before, and would resume recording in two-to-three day stints throughout March. Smith had first seen Pink Floyd at UFO. He didn't understand the music, but he understood that it was popular.

"It was my job to get them to think more melodically," said Smith in his last ever interview, with the author, two years before his death in 2008. Smith found Syd an unwilling pupil: "I'd come up with some suggestion and he'd just nod. Then go back in, do another take and it would be exactly the same. It was like talking to a brick wall."

Smith's younger engineer, Jeff Jarratt, felt differently, and recalls Syd as the band's "creative force" in the studio.

Nevertheless, what was permissible at the UFO club was less acceptable on record. Barrett had to be reined in. Floyd's debut single, Arnold Layne (*video still pictured above*), was released on March 10 and reached Number 20 in the UK. A dark pop ditty about a Cambridge underwear thief, it was still more conventional than anything else in the Floyd's live set. "Syd always had this thing about 'no rules'," explains his old Cambridge friend Iain 'Emo' Moore. "Syd thought when he joined a pop group there'd be no rules. But, of course, it was the same as anywhere else."



APRIL

For Peter Jenner, the 14-Hour Technicolor Dream concert accompanied "the height of acid use that summer". Held at London's Alexandra Palace on April 29, Floyd shared a bill with the likes of Soft Machine, Tomorrow and The Exploding Galaxy Ballet Company. Floyd materialised on stage at around dawn, having already played a gig in Holland the same night.

"Syd was doing a lot of acid," says Roger Waters. "But there were no real problems at this stage." Not all the band shared their singer's taste for LSD or even dope: Waters had tripped once by 1967 but, along with Nick Mason, preferred alcohol to drugs. Rick Wright smoked dope but would claim to be wary of LSD.

Future film director and sleeve artist Aubrey 'Po' Powell drove the band's van that night, and recalls the mood: "The night before we'd been in Amsterdam smoking dope. Everyone tired, most of us tripping, and feeling pretty awful."

Waters' belief that Syd's behaviour was not yet a problem is contradicted by Powell's memories of a drive back to London after a gig in Portsmouth that month. Barrett travelled up front in the van. "As the others didn't really want to be with him," says Po. "I remember we smoked a joint, and Syd must have laughed for about two hours, hardly speaking. He was obviously losing the plot."

MAY

In his book, White Bicycles: Making Music In The 1960s, Arnold Layne's producer Joe Boyd writes of running into Syd Barrett in May '67. Barrett appeared "glassy-eyed", and Lindsay Corner told Boyd that he had been taking acid every day for the past week.

Barrett's ex-flatmates insist he never took LSD every day at Earlham Street. However, at some point that year, Syd took a room at 101 Cromwell Road, Kensington, a house with, as one former resident puts it, "a serious acid history".

Syd's Cambridge friends Nigel and Jenny Lesmoir-Gordon lived in the building's first-floor flat, while fledgling artist Duggie Fields had a room on the top floor. There was, however, an ever-changing cast of tenants, augmented by a stream of students, dossers and drug fiends passing through the building, day and night. Fields took a more cautious attitude towards LSD than his housemates.

The Lesmoir-Gordons dispensed trips from a bottle kept in their fridge, and shared voyages of self-discovery with several musicians, including '50s rocker Vince Taylor, whom, Nigel recalls, once devised an LSD-inspired alternative cosmos, where the gods of Greek mythology were replaced by the pop stars of the day.

Into this madness came Syd Barrett. "There were people around Syd who encouraged him to take acid," claimed Rick Wright in 1996. Others in the Floyd's entourage talked of coffee being 'spiked' with acid at 101. According to Libby Gausden, Barrett's late mother, Win, always believed her son's problems were attributable "to someone slipping something into his drink".

Interviewed now, Duggie Fields disputes it all: "If they were spiking everyone, why didn't they spike me? It never happened."

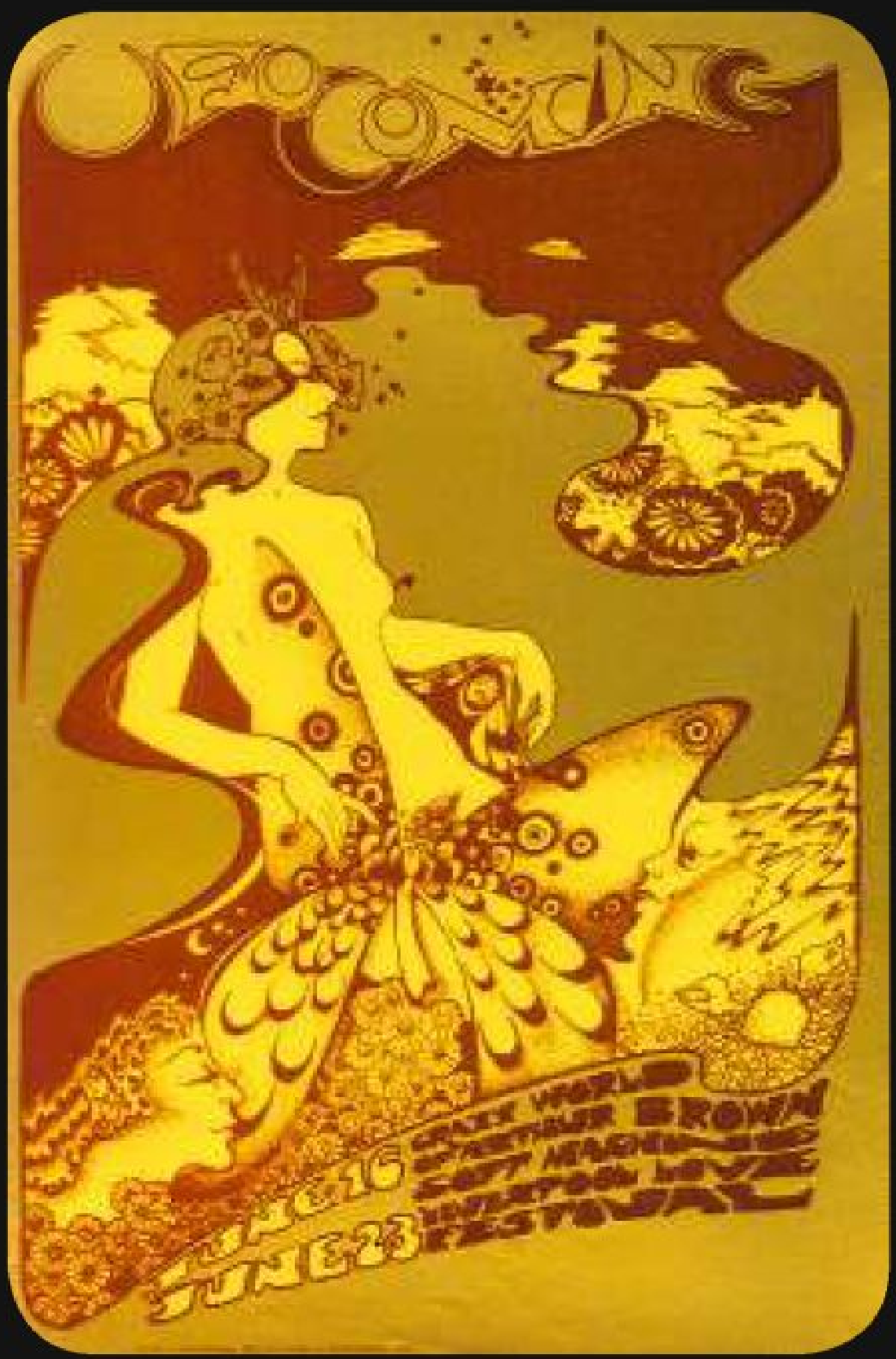
Two of Syd's other Cromwell Road housemates from '67 offer conflicting memories about Syd's drug intake. Interviewed in 2002, Alistair 'Jock' Findlay recalled Barrett taking fewer than 10 acid trips in '67. His then girlfriend, Susan Kingsford, had moved into Cromwell Road after a well-paid job as a Cadbury's Flake girl in a TV advert enabled her to "just take drugs and have a good time". She now admits: "We took acid constantly, enormous quantities." But she too denies spiking anyone.

On May 14, Austrian musician Hans Keller interviewed Barrett and Waters on the BBC's arts show Look Of The Week (*pictured left*). Both answered questions in their cut-glass, middle-class accents, with Barrett as erudite as his then abstemious bandmate. Keller, a string quartet fan, offered one nugget of wisdom: the Floyd's music reminded him of "a regression to childhood". It was a comment that would seem even more pertinent as the year wore on.

Within days, Pink Floyd were recording a second single. Barrett's latest composition, See Emily Play, was a charming meld of wacky psychedelia and simple pop, partly inspired by an area near the Gog Magog hills, outside Cambridge, in which he'd spent his childhood. Producer Norman Smith was delighted: "I thought, At last this is the one, but it didn't do a thing for Syd." Not for the last time, Barrett expressed his reservations about why the band had to release singles in the first place.

David Gilmour, then playing gigs in France with his own band, dropped into the studio during a brief visit to London, and was shocked by his friend's condition.

"I came in to see someone that I knew very well, after a period of quite a long time. And there was a very different person there," he states. "People who were with him all the way through maybe weren't spotting a change because it was happening so gradually."



JUNE

On June 2, Pink Floyd made their first appearance at UFO in nearly two months. The UFO (*poster above*) audience had now expanded beyond a clique of fashionable insiders to include what some dismissively called "weekend hippies". Within months the club would close following drug busts and police pressure. For now, though, queues stretched along Tottenham Court Road, as the likes of Jimi Hendrix turned up to watch London's hippest rock band.

Peter Jenner recalls being shocked by the state of Syd before the UFO show. "There was this look in his eyes," Jenner remembers. "I don't think he knew what was going on." On-stage, the band's performance was far from overwhelming. "They played to the largest crowd that UFO has ever held," claimed the review in International Times, "… but it's a pity they had to play like bums."

See Emily Play was released on June 16, and reached Number 5 in the UK. Floyd would move even further away from the underground scene that had nurtured them. Before long, Waters would be complaining about "the screamers" – teenage girls only there to hear the big hit.

"Roger got terribly annoyed," remembers Libby Gausden, "but also because at some shows the girls in the audience were just ➢

Rex

chanting 'Syd! Syd!' The thing is, I don't think Syd noticed it."

Away in his own little world, Barrett never had to work hard to attract female attention. Lindsay Corner would drift in and out of his life, but she would have plenty of competition: other Cambridge girls and aspiring models, and some who simply wanted to bed a pop star, any pop star. "There is some suggestion," claims another Cambridge friend, writer David Gale, "that the girls later became as much of a problem as the drugs."

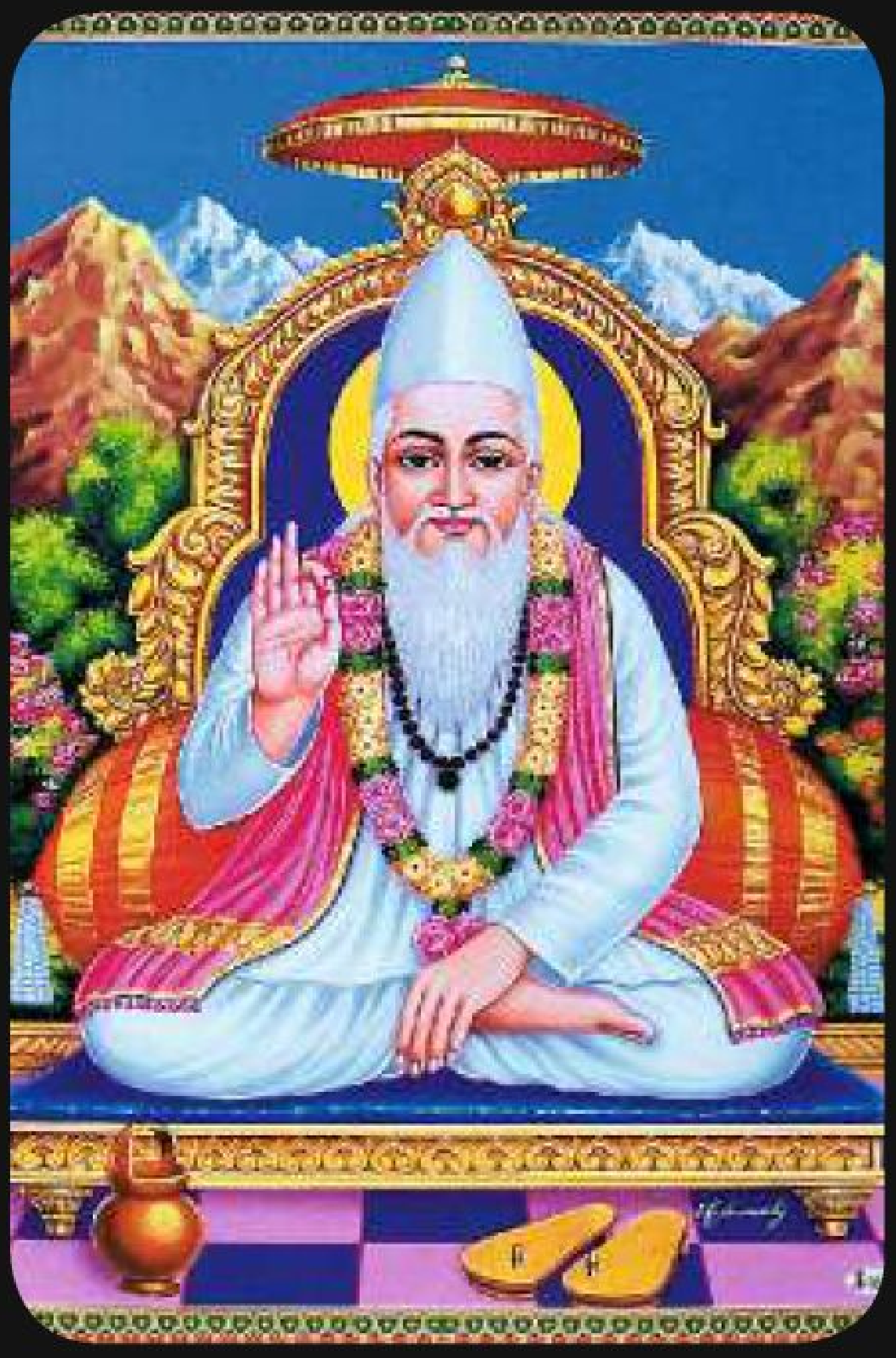
JULY

According to Andrew King, Barrett's decline can be measured by his three visits to Top Of The Pops. On July 6, Norman Smith accompanied the band to the BBC's Lime Grove Studios, explaining how they had to mime to See Emily Play – something Syd was unhappy about. "They went off to have their hair washed and their make-up done," said Smith. "Syd didn't usually seem to care how he looked, but he came back looking terrific." As soon as Smith complimented him on his appearance, Barrett seized a handful of tissues and began wiping the make-up off and messing up his hair.

The band returned to the show a week later, and Smith recalls Syd "just letting the guitar dangle in front of him". Returning to Lime Grove for a third time, Barrett protested to his bandmates that as John Lennon didn't have play Top Of The Pops, neither should he.

Before one appearance, Syd, running late, hailed a taxi in Trafalgar Square to take him to the studio, only to turn up instead at a house in Beaufort Street, South Kensington, where an acid dealer dealt his wares from the basement. Susan Kingsford was now living at the house, and recalls a disorientated Syd arriving, with his bare feet bleeding all over the doorstep. Before long, members of the Floyd's crew descended on the house, and demanding Barrett accompany them to TOTPs. "They dragged him out," she recalls. That night, Barrett and Waters were filmed seated on cushions for Floyd's mimed performance of See Emily Play (*pictured above*) with some claiming Syd was too unsteady to remain standing.

Before the month was over, Syd would perform another vanishing act, leaving the studio just minutes before the Floyd's spot on BBC Radio's Saturday Club. Whatever enthusiasm he had once shown for becoming a pop star had clearly drained away.



AUGUST

Released on August 5, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*'s arrival should have been accompanied by an appearance on a prestigious German TV show. Instead, Floyd cancelled. A fortnight later, the band backed out of a planned set at the Seventh National Blues and Jazz Festival in Windsor. Speculation grew in the music press that the band had split up. "It is not true that Syd has left the group," Andrew King told New Musical Express. "He is tired and exhausted, and has been advised to rest for two weeks."

Peter Jenner contacted his old university friend, Sam Hutt, who suggested Barrett join him and his wife for a fortnight's holiday on the Balearic island of Formentera. Newly qualified as a doctor, Hutt was familiar with LSD, but was regarded as a calming, sympathetic influence on Syd.

The vacationing party included the Hutts and their baby son, Syd, Lindsay, Rick Wright and his future wife Juliette Gale. Roger Waters and his future wife Judy Trim also dropped by from Ibiza where they were holidaying. At first, Barrett seemed relaxed, lazing around on the beach and trying to play a sitar that Hutt had recently acquired. Unfortunately, he was still taking LSD.

"There may have been some days when he didn't take any," Sam recalls, "but he seemed to be munching it the whole time." At one point, Barrett was discovered sleeping in a graveyard. Scared witless during an electrical storm, his behaviour became odder still, as he tried to climb the walls of the beach house, tearing chunks out of the plaster with his fingernails.

While some took LSD for recreational purposes, there was still a widespread belief at the time that it should be taken for self-discovery. By the end of the year, some within Barrett's circle of friends were seeking enlightenment elsewhere. Several had travelled to India and been initiated into the Sant Mat sect (*image above*), an offshoot of the Sikh religion that preached abstinence from meat, drugs, alcohol and sex outside marriage, and daily meditation sessions. Syd had visited the sect's guru during a visit to London, but was turned down for initiation. "Perhaps Syd was quite upset at not being considered spiritually ready," suggests David Gale. "He was certainly looking for something else in his life."

SEPTEMBER

Back in England and tasked with writing another hit, Syd's latest compositions hardly inspired confidence. The band spent time working on three new songs: Jugband Blues, Vegetable Man and Scream Thy Last Scream. Only Jugband Blues would make it on to their second album, *A Saucerful Of Secrets*.

On Vegetable Man Syd described the clothes he was wearing at the time of writing – "There's a kind of stink about blue velvet trousers". Scream Thy Last Scream originally featured Nick Mason on vocals, and a nursery rhyme-like chorus. Neither were likely to replace See Emily Play in the affections of the weekend hippies.

"There are dabs of genius, but they're a bit of a mess," ventures Andrew King. Peter Jenner (*pictured above with Syd*) describes both songs as "psychological flashing". Both are now available on *The Early Years…* box set. But in 1967, Waters was adamant neither should be included on the next Pink Floyd LP.

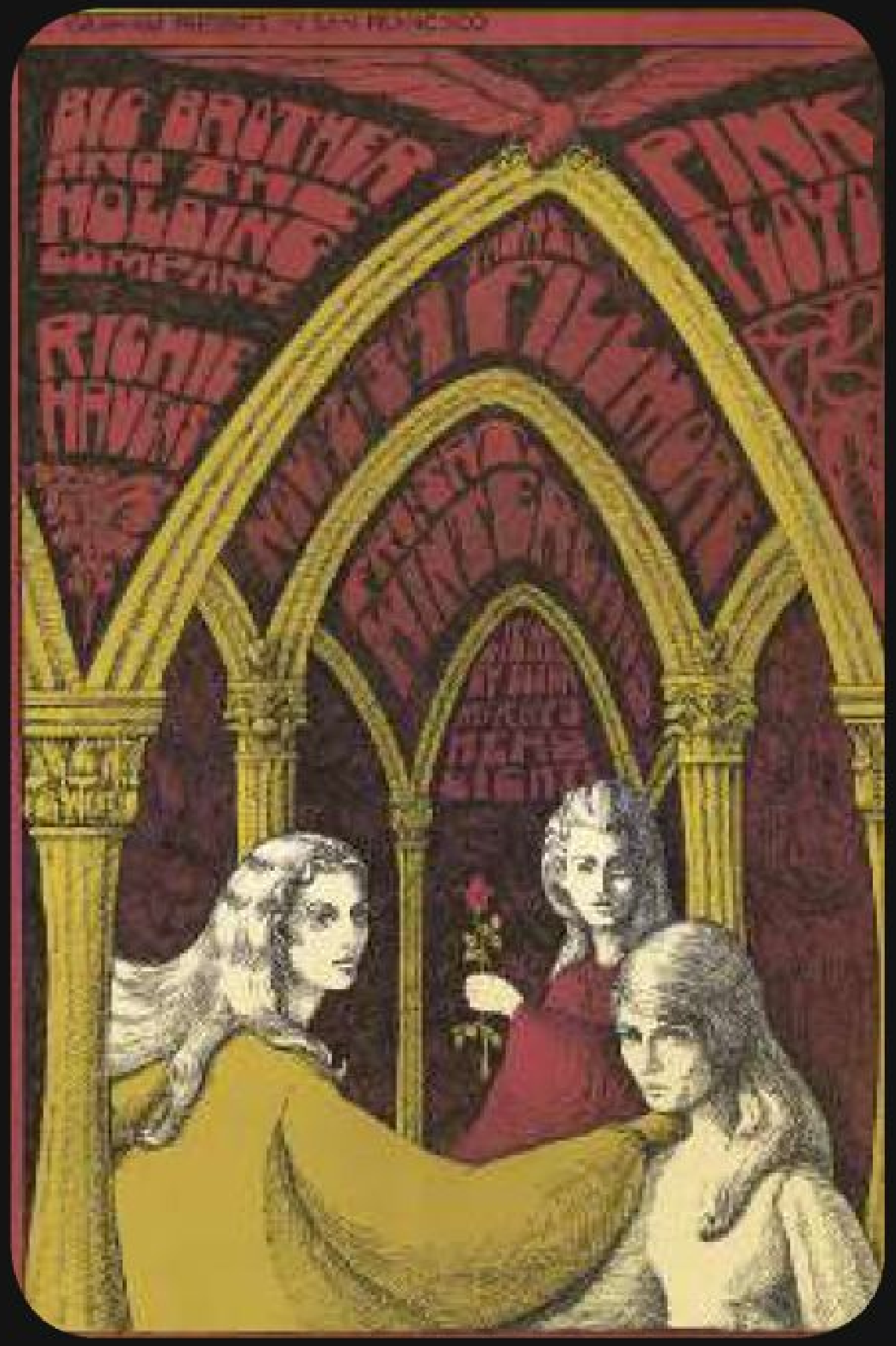
OCTOBER

EMI's hopes for a new single were finally realised during a three-day recording session beginning on October 24. Apples And Oranges was an engagingly simple tune Barrett had written about a girl he'd seen out shopping. "It's a happy song," he offered, "and it's got a touch of Christmas." While an easier listen than Vegetable Man, producer Norman Smith (*above*) was unimpressed: "I chose Apples And Oranges as it was the best of a bad lot".

Those close to Barrett but outside the band think he had become disenchanted with Pink Floyd. Susan Kingsford recalls Syd not speaking for hours, tripping one night at Cromwell Road, before suddenly asking her if she was going to Cambridge that weekend. When she told him she was, Barrett answered: "Do you know, that's all I want to do. I just want to go home."

In an attempt to separate him from his drug buddies, it was suggested Syd and Lindsay Corner move into Andrew King's flat in Richmond. They agreed. It had been four months since See Emily Play had troubled the Top 10, and with Syd's reputation preceding him, Floyd's gig sheet was looking barren.

Towards the end of the year, Barrett started visiting the Battersea home of another Cambridge friend, artist and film-maker Anthony Stern. Hit singles, it seems, were the farthest thing from Barrett's mind. Between them, they hatched plans to make an abstract film to be used as a potential aid to meditation. "Syd just didn't get the idea of commerciality," recalls Stern. "My interpretation of Syd was that he was innately revolutionary and impulsively creative. Whatever he did, he would do from a different angle, and I think Syd was beginning to feel deeply disappointed by what was happening with the Floyd." In the meantime, though, one more pop star fantasy was about become a reality: a trip to America.


BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY
PINK FLOYD
RICHIE HAVENS

NOVEMBER

According to Peter Jenner, "It all went wrong in the States." But it was Jenner's partner Andrew King who managed the Floyd's debut US tour and bore the brunt of Barrett's misbehaviour. Prior to making the trip, Syd and a posse of friends, including lighting engineer Peter Wynne-Willson, had visited Vidal Sassoon's

Getty, Alamy

salon to have their hair permed. "I wonder if Syd had an adverse reaction to the perm," laughs Wynne-Willson. "I do remember that the horror look came into his eyes soon after."

Floyd were initially scheduled to open their US tour at Los Angeles' Whisky A-Go-Go on October 23. Absent visas meant they didn't play live until November 4, opening for Big Brother And The Holding Company and Richie Havens. Big Brother's lead singer Janis Joplin was an obliging host, getting Roger Waters and Nick Mason royally pissed on Southern Comfort.

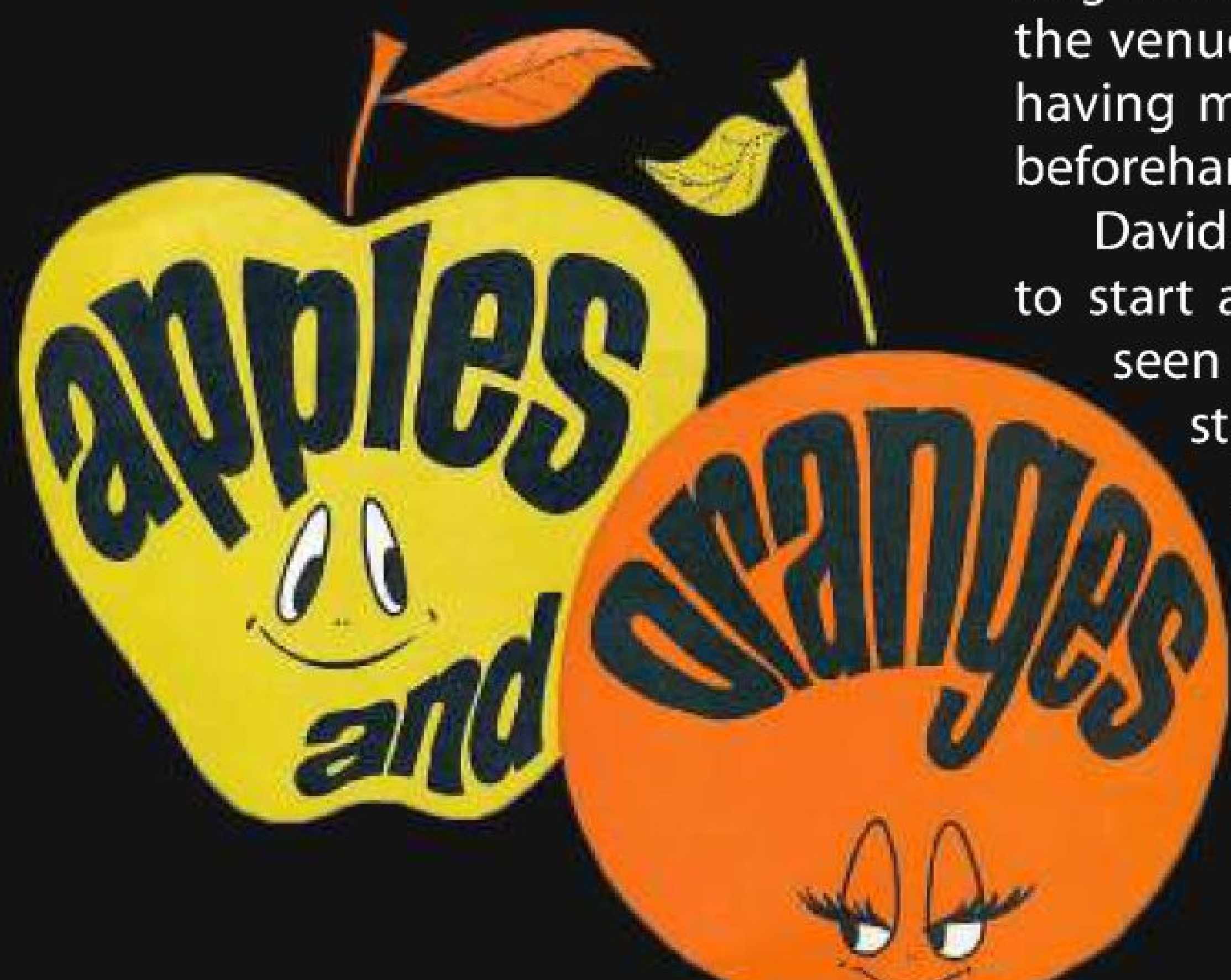
Meanwhile, Barrett and Wynne-Willson were spirited away to a hillside retreat by a couple of bewitching hippy girls and plied with the strongest grass they'd ever smoked. Wynne-Willson still maintains that the amount of dope Syd was puffing back in London contributed to his mental decline, as much if not more than the LSD. In California, it certainly took its toll. Playing the gig that evening, Wynne-Willson could just about work the band's lighting equipment; Barrett, meanwhile, just stood on-stage unable to play guitar.

Syd's inability or reluctance to perform would manifest itself at other shows, as he de-tuned his guitar, thrashed it aimlessly or stopped playing altogether. One night, after fussing with his wretched perm, he tipped the contents of a jar of Brylcreem into his hair just before going on stage. But the facts are blurred. While some claim this now infamous incident happened in America, others insist it happened at a gig in London.

Interviewed for the Pat Boone Show in the US, Syd offered only one-word answers. On the American Bandstand TV show, he aimlessly mimed to Apples And Oranges, turning in such a desultory performance the camera focused on his bandmates, including a quietly fuming Roger Waters.

Andrew King cancelled further dates on the East Coast and brought the band home, via the Hippy Happy Fair festival in the Netherlands. "We had this idea – don't treat Syd like he's a loony," says Jenner. "Maybe he's the sane one. Let's decipher what he's trying to say." Backstage at the festival, the band began passing him handwritten notes in an attempt to re-open the lines of communication.

Within days of arriving home, the group were pushed out on a provincial package tour alongside The Nice, The Move and headliners The Jimi Hendrix Experience (*Jimi below*). However, one night, possibly at Liverpool's Empire Theatre on November 18, Syd vanished before showtime. The Nice's guitarist Davy O'List volunteered to stand in. Waters instructed him to wear Barrett's hat and to stand with his back to the audience, as they played Interstellar Overdrive. Buoyed by the sound of screaming girls, O'List turned around, and, as he recalls now, "the screaming stopped as soon as the girls realised I wasn't Syd". However, despite Barrett's behaviour, he was not yet ready to accept an understudy. Syd was back, on time, for the next show. "After that,' recalls O'List, "he wouldn't look at me when we were together on the tour bus."

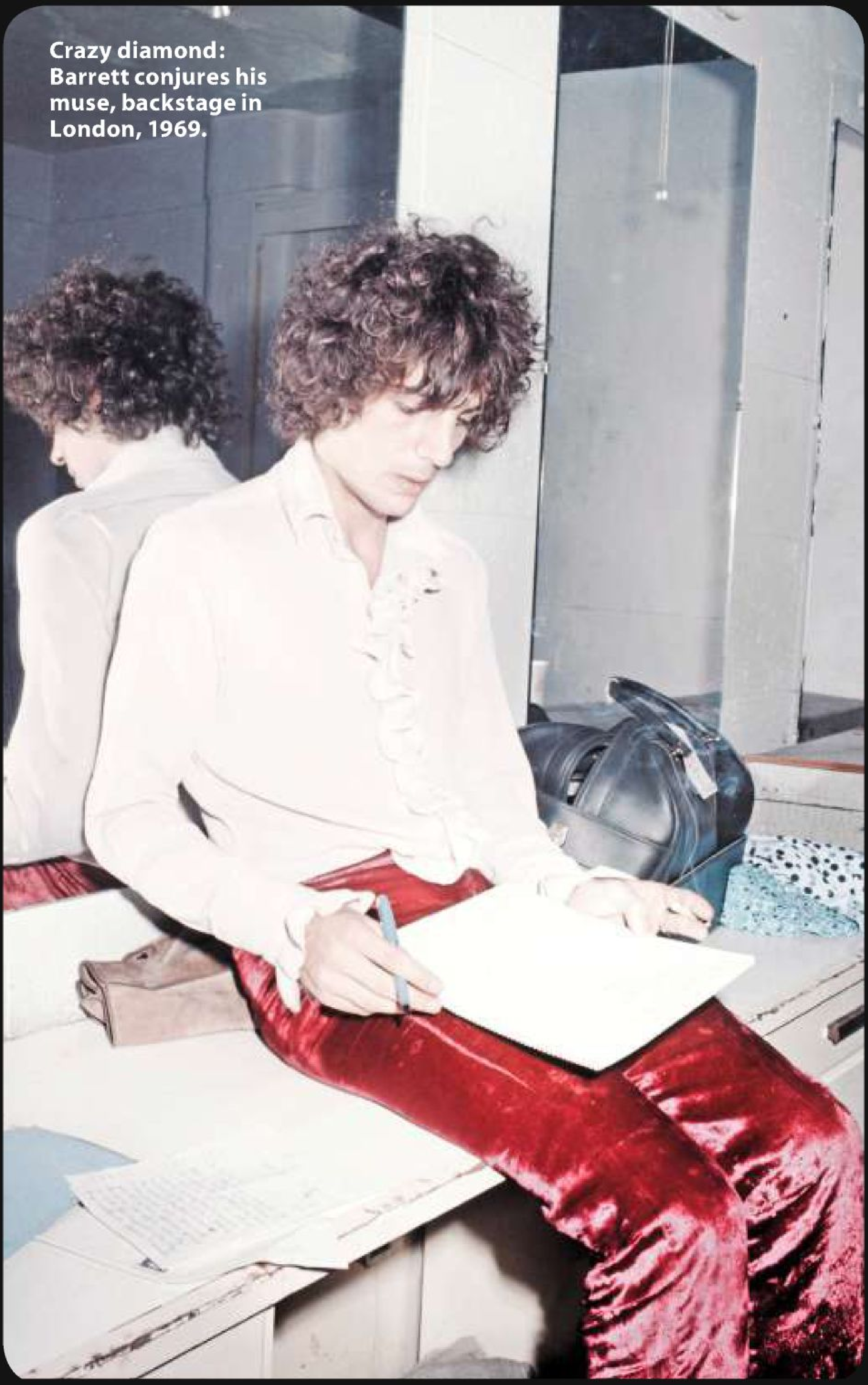


DECEMBER

"By the end of the Hendrix tour, we were frazzled, and that was because of Syd," said Nick Mason. Off-stage, Waters was demanding a solution to what he now called "The Syd Problem", forcing those close to the band to take sides. "It seemed to split into two camps," recalls one eyewitness from the time, "divided into those who smoked dope and those who didn't. At that time, Roger didn't, so he was seen as being, somehow, uncool." The dope-smoking Jenner and King sided with Barrett, with Jenner admitting he regarded some of Syd's behaviour as avant-garde, "and I thought avant-garde was cool". But Libby Gausden says that "Syd would have gone off the rails a lot sooner if it hadn't been for Roger Waters. Roger was great, he organised everybody."

Syd's December 22 performance at the Christmas On Earth Continued show at Kensington Olympia was the final straw. Sharing a bill with The Who and Hendrix, Floyd's professional reputation was in tatters, as Waters and the road crew bundled Barrett onto the stage, where he stood motionless with his unplugged guitar hanging loosely around his neck. After cutting their set short, the band fled the venue and a furious promoter, having managed to bag their fee beforehand.

David Gilmour, back from France to start a new band, had already seen Floyd disintegrate on-stage. "They were a piece of crap," he later recalled. "I remember thinking I could knock them into some kind of shape." Within weeks, he would be given the chance to try.



Crazy diamond: Barrett conjures his muse, backstage in London, 1969.

SYD AND HIS CAMBRIDGE FRIENDS HAD GROWN UP with the sight of dishevelled university dons peddling erratically around town on upright bicycles; their brilliant minds preoccupied by higher matters. According to many, Cambridge was a town in which eccentricity was considered not only permissible but also something of a virtue, and Syd turned into another in that long line of local oddities.

Roger Waters has always believed Barrett suffered from schizophrenia – something disputed by Syd's family. Interviewed in MOJO in April 2016, his sister Rosemary suggested he may have had Asperger's syndrome: "Nowadays he would undoubtedly have been diagnosed. But we didn't know what that was in the '60s"

Certainly Barrett's yearning to go home to Cambridge at the height of his musical success suggests a desire to return to his childhood world – a place free from the responsibilities of adult life and the superficiality of pop stardom.

Many believe the drugs Syd took exacerbated existing problems. A familiar party line among those who survived the excesses of 1967 is that *they* took more drugs than Syd and lived to tell the tale.

As Duggie Fields explains, "There was also a very clearly defined notion of 'cool' back then. I'm afraid mental illness was something people romanticised. It was considered cool to be mad."

"You never knew how much of the weirdness was put on," offers another friend from that era. "It's like something Kingsley Amis once said: that if you keep parodying a word and putting it in inverted commas, sooner or later you start using the word without the inverted commas."

Mentally unstable, unseated by drugs or just plain contrary, Syd Barrett would begin 1968 wondering why one of his oldest friends, David Gilmour, was now playing guitar on-stage beside him. The future seemed uncertain and confusing. In the space of just 12 months, it had all gone terribly wrong.

Lost and found: Pink Floyd play New York in 1968 with Gilmour (far right).

Alamy

PINK FLOYD'*s upcoming box set, the gargantuan* The Early Years 1965-1972, *documents their experimental period searching for inspiration after* **SYD BARRETT**'*s departure.* **MARK BLAKE** *listens in.*

REMEMBER A DAY

IF THERE WAS A STRAW POLL AMONG THOSE AGED between 40 and 55 to find a favourite Pink Floyd album, *Relics* would be in there somewhere. This budget compilation was released in 1971, but enjoyed a fruitful afterlife, beginning with its re-appearance on the cheap and cheerful Music For Pleasure imprint in 1978.

When a year later Pink Floyd had their Number 1 hit, Another Brick In The Wall (Part 2), the cut-price *Relics* was there already in the shops. This meant a generation of cash-strapped, post-punk teenagers could experience See Emily Play, Julia Dream and other early Floyd oddities without spending all their paper round money. The later *Relics* reissue in 1990 did the same again for sensitive indie kids eager to hear more of the original sensitive indie kid, Syd Barrett.

Had Pink Floyd not used it already, *Relics* would have been the perfect title for *The Early Years 1965-1972* box set. Running to 27 discs, 130 tracks, 12 hours of audio and 15 hours of video, *The Early Years…* is 'Relics: The Director's Cut' – had that director been Cecil B. DeMille. It does what *Relics* did all those years ago, but on a biblical scale.

The Early Years… goes back further than any existing compilation, beginning with Pink Floyd's first demos in 1965. The rare Syd Barrett originals Lucy Leave and Double O Bo are jittery blues played by moonlighting art and architecture students in sensible sports jackets and woollen ties. It ends, broadly speaking, seven years later, with the imperious, Syd-less Floyd – all shoulder-length hair, beards and bare feet – performing their glacial prog rock concerto Echoes in the volcanic ruins at Pompeii.

This, then, is the Pink Floyd story before 1973's *The Dark Side Of The Moon*; more than that, though, it's the story behind *that* story. *The Early Years…* is all about rare BBC radio sessions, never-recorded live concept albums, art house film scores and a version of Interstellar Overdrive with special guest Frank Zappa recorded at a Belgian rock festival in 1969. And it's this material which will entice collectors and devotees as much, if not more, than the box's new quad mix of Atom Heart Mother and the remastered Obscured By Clouds – as good as they are.

The narrative arc here is the birth of Pink Floyd, their reconfiguration following the departure of Syd Barrett and the arrival of David Gilmour, and the four or so years they spent working out what they wanted to be. "We were looking for something," Gilmour told MOJO. "We were finding ourselves."

Pink Floyd did an awful lot of looking. You'd be hard pushed to find an archival release in recent memory that better illustrates the polarity between the music business in 2016 and that same business almost 50 years earlier. Any young musician signed to one of the few surviving majors and under heavy manners to have a hit – or else – might be moved to jealous tears by the early Floyd's licence to fiddle about in EMI's studios for weeks for modest commercial reward.

DESPITE THE SUBSEQUENT MYTHOLOGY, THE SYD Barrett era is a fleeting part of this story. After those 1965 demos, Floyd reappeared as new signings to EMI two years later, playing oddball pop, with Barrett's spectral guitar and Hilaire Belloc and I Ching-inspired lyrics.

The box set reminds us, though, that the hits, Arnold Layne and

See Emily Play, were flashes of pop songwriting ingenuity, never to be repeated. Extracts from a 1967 concert in Stockholm see Floyd shunning both songs to instead play Reaction In G, a frantic, free-wheeling instrumental that would have transported any tripping Swedes down the rabbit hole and into Alice's Wonderland.

This is music that wouldn't get anywhere near a daytime radio playlist in this century or the last. As Soft Machine drummer and early admirer Robert Wyatt remarked: "I was always amazed at Pink Floyd's nerve in taking their time to get from one note to another. I couldn't do it."

With Syd gone and after three flop UK singles ending with November '68's chirpy, *Sgt. Pepper*-ish Point Me At The Sky, Pink Floyd chose not to release any more 45s. There was no point: they hadn't worked out how to write hits yet. And if, as Roger Waters claimed, "we just wanted to be rich and famous", they took a tortuous route to get there.

Barrett's replacement, David Gilmour, could sing like an Everly Brother and play guitar like Jimi Hendrix. But they had him 'playing' that guitar with what sounds like a table leg on *A Saucerful Of Secrets*' multi-part instrumental title track – or The Massed Gadgets Of Hercules, as it was still called in the June '68 BBC radio session on Volume Two, Disc One of *The Early Years*....

The first part of this collection demonstrates that without the need to write hits Floyd could indulge themselves – and then some. But in doing so, they helped break the traditional music business model and replaced it with something else. *Sgt. Pepper* proved the LP could be a serious artistic statement and was as important as the single. But it was The Beatles' fellow Abbey Road habitués who drove that message home with the single-free albums *A Saucerful Of Secrets* and *Ummagumma*. If you liked Pink Floyd you had to buy the LP; there was no other choice.

This collection also reminds us that 1970's *Atom Heart Mother* was an LP whose entire first side comprised Pink Floyd, the EMI Pops Orchestra and choral scholar John Aldiss's choir performing an instrumental work made up of a spaghetti western-style guitar theme, gunshots, whinnying horses, drummer Nick Mason's distorted non-vocals and Gregorian-style chants. But it also digs up the version they recorded without all the accoutrements.

This was brilliantly, almost comically uncommercial music. And *still* it sold: *Atom Heart Mother* gave Pink Floyd their first UK Number 1. But heard again now its title track sounds quite divorced from anything on their first US Number 1, *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

Until now, the only official memento of Floyd live in the 1960s has been the first half of 1969's *Ummagumma*, featuring live takes of Astronomy Domine, Careful With That Axe, Eugene, etc. But the secret history to Pink Floyd's 1969 is revealed here with live recordings of their two 'lost' conceptual works, The Man and The Journey.

Both pieces contained newly written movements, but also repurposed existing and recently recorded Floyd material from '68 and '69. However, neither piece was ever recorded in full in a studio. Until now they've been the musical equivalent of those abandoned London tube stations, briefly glimpsed – like ghosts – as the train rattles through a tunnel.

> "THE EARLY YEARS IS 'RELICS: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT' – HAD THAT DIRECTOR BEEN CECIL B. DEMILLE."

THE EARLY YEARS
1965—1972

The Man and The Journey told the story of a day in the life, some elements of which Pink Floyd would address later on Echoes and *Dark Side*.... But in 1969, Roger Waters had only just started writing lyrics about loneliness and man's inability to communicate. They weren't quite there.

Instead, a live reading of The Man and The Journey, recorded in Amsterdam in September '69, tells that story through improvisational, post-psychedelic rock, BBC Radiophonic Workshop-meets-horror movie instrumentals and the languid jazz pop of Afternoon, starring Rick Wright on trombone, and which *Relics* fans will recognise by its alternative title, Biding My Time.

The Floyd's popular image in the '80s and '90s, as purveyors of sensible 'grown-up' rock music, is also challenged here, with The Man and The Journey documenting a year in which their live shows were as much performance art happenings as rock'n'roll gigs.

During The Man and The Journey at The Royal Albert Hall in April '69 (a filmed rehearsal is included on *The Early Years*...), the band and their crew sawed blocks of wood and drank tea on-stage. At the same show, one of their art student friends, clad in a gimp-like rubber monster suit fitted with a water bottle and hose, 'urinated' on unsuspecting audience members. The overriding theme to all this is Pink Floyd striving for *something* that elevates them beyond a simple pop group playing simple pop songs. But they're not quite sure what that elusive something is yet.

Even bigger clues can be found in the recordings they made in conjunction with their regular LP releases – namely the soundtracks for director Barbet Schroeder's 1969 movie More and Michelangelo Antonioni's Zabriskie Point a year later. Floyd's relationship with film began early. And this collection fills in the blanks by including their rejected score for conceptual artist John Latham's 1967 movie Speak, and their eerie bleeps and drones for director Peter Sykes's 1968 film noir The Committee.

Without the freedom to muck about at Abbey Road, and with a director calling the shots, Floyd had no choice but to knuckle down. And it's on More and its attendant outtakes and on Floyd's rejected contributions to Zabriskie Point that you can hear them blossoming as songwriters. More was a tale of thrill-seeking hippies in late '60s Ibiza; Zabriskie Point was about Californian students fighting 'the man'. Neither would enjoy a shelf-life beyond that era, but the music endures.

More's Green Is The Colour and Cirrus Minor and many of these previously unheard Zabriskie Point outtakes aspire towards the conciseness and melodicism of *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. Even if Pink Floyd didn't know that's what they were doing at the time.

On their next conventional LP, 1971's *Meddle*, you sensed Pink Floyd's desire to express themselves without the beeps and drones and the urinating rubber monster. There are five versions here of *Meddle*'s centerpiece, Echoes, starting with a 7:01-minute composition titled Nothing Part 14 (Echoes Work In Progress). Echoes falls within the boundaries of this collection. But like 1972's Pink Floyd Live At Pompeii and *Obscured By Clouds* (their soundtrack to Barbet Schroeder's La Vallée) it feels like the beginning of the next chapter.

The Early Years... raises the sometimes awkward question of Pink Floyd's conflicted view of this period. Resident diplomat Nick Mason cites Set The Controls For The Heart of The Sun (of which there are 13 different versions in this box) as one of his favourite Floyd songs of all time, but Rick Wright told the author he cringed whenever he heard his compositions, 1968's Paintbox and Remember A Day (also included); David Gilmour once described the Atom Heart Mother suite as "absolute rubbish".

Perhaps age has softened their views. *The Early Years*... suggests Floyd's surviving members taking stock of their eclectic past and much of it sounds like a charming, if accidental, tribute to the late Syd Barrett and Rick Wright. Without Barrett, there wouldn't have been a Pink Floyd, and Wright's signature playing is all over their greatest work.

The music here is extraordinary, brilliant, strange and sometimes challenging, but never less than fascinating. Ⓜ

Mark Blake is author of Pigs Might Fly: The Inside Story Of Pink Floyd (Aurum Press).

Feed your head: Jefferson Airplane (from left) Paul Kantner, Grace Slick, Marty Balin, Jorma Kaukonen, Spencer Dryden, Jack Casady.

The ULTIMATE TRIP

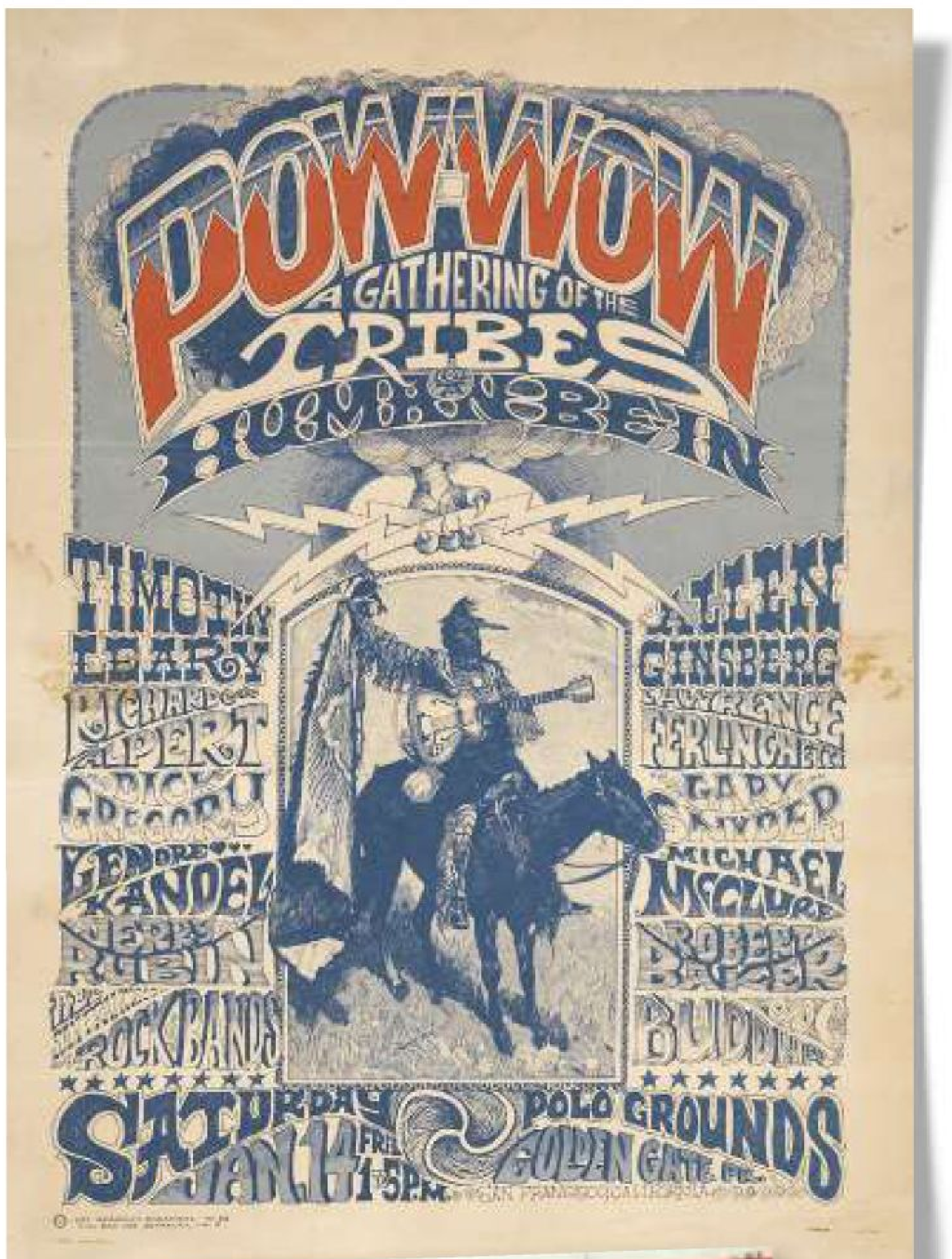
In summer 1967, **JEFFERSON AIRPLANE** *were the hippest gang of San Francisco acid heads ever to barnstorm the higher reaches of the US charts. But within months their hippie dream was crumbling due to the demands of hard work and hard rock.* **JEFF TAMARKIN** *on the destructive undercurrents to the Summer of Love.*

Getty

Through the looking glass: Grace Slick at the London press reception for their April '68 UK visit, with Spencer Dryden reflected in the mirror.

THE YEAR HAD STARTED WELL FOR JEFFERSON Airplane. A few months earlier they'd lured raven-haired Grace Slick away from fellow San Francisco band The Great Society to be their new female lead vocalist, and they'd recently wrapped the sessions for their all-important second album, *Surrealistic Pillow*. Word of the Airplane was leaking beyond the borders of the city Paul Kantner described as "49 square miles surrounded entirely by reality". Over the following months the band would experience the highest of high times, but their rise from local favourites to nationally revered psychedelia missionaries also marked the start of their long demise.

The Summer of Love began six months earlier, in January 1967. The official title of the momentous occasion that ushered it in was "Pow-Wow – A Gathering of the Tribes: Human Be-In", although most denizens refer to it simply as the Be-In. It was the first event that brought together a mass of alternative-minded young people, for no real purpose other than celebrating their own existence. For many, it was an awakening; they had no idea their numbers had grown so vast.



SURREALISTIC PILLOW
RCA Victor
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE

Over 20,000 revellers came to the Polo Grounds in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park that sunny winter afternoon of January 14, ostensibly to listen to gurus and poets and bands, but mostly just to *be*. Counterculture celebrities Dick Gregory, Richard Alpert, Jerry Rubin and Lawrence Ferlinghetti spoke to the crowd. The assembled multitude heard Quicksilver Messenger Service and Big Brother And The Holding Company, as well as Jefferson Airplane with their newly recruited singer. Buddhists meditated, Allen Ginsberg chanted, and Timothy Leary exhorted the crowd to "Turn on, tune in, drop out."

Out of the sky, a parachutist floated, landing right on target as The Grateful Dead finished a song. The politicos met the acid-heads met the Hell's Angels met the swirling rock'n'roll dervishes and all co-existed peacefully. It was all over in four or five hours, but it heralded the arrival of what the media would call the Love Generation.

As he often did, San Francisco Chronicle music critic Ralph Gleason wrote eloquently about the event: it was, "a statement of life, not of death, and a promise of good, not of evil".

Airplane rhythm guitarist Paul Kantner, after reading Gleason's piece on the Be-In, began appropriating and embellishing upon some of the writer's words and concepts, crafting a new song, Won't You Try/Saturday Afternoon:

"Saturday afternoon, yellow clouds rising in the noon/Acid, incense and balloons."

The Be-In received media coverage throughout the United States and abroad, further broadcasting the word that San Francisco was a groovy place to be if your own home-town was boring – and compared to San Francisco, what town wasn't? The Airplane's own profile, meanwhile, had been raised considerably when they received their first taste of major national publicity just weeks prior to the Be-In. A December 1966 Newsweek story on the new San Francisco music deemed the Airplane "the most popular of the groups".

★ ★ ★ ★

"GRACE SLICK WORE A RED RIDING HOOD OUTFIT. SHE WAS EXTRAORDINARILY BEAUTIFUL."

DICK CLARK

Getty

This new notoriety outside of their own community created occupational hazards, however. The first dope bust involving an Airplane member had occurred during the band's recent stay in Los Angeles, where they had been recording, when bassist Jack Casady was nabbed in his hotel room for possession of hashish and the hookah he used to smoke it. Nothing ultimately came of the arrest, and the incident was mercifully kept out of the papers, but it was becoming obvious not only to the Airplane but to many high-profile rock musicians that their much-publicised high times were becoming of greater interest to ambitious law enforcement officials. Members of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Grateful Dead would all see the inside of a jail cell before long.

Jack was soon arrested a second time when, serving as a human guinea pig for an especially potent new hallucinogenic called STP, he was picked up near Monterey, sitting stark naked in a puddle, contemplating something or other, a large grin plastered across his face.

IN FEBRUARY, RCA VICTOR RECORDS RELEASED *Surrealistic Pillow*, the Airplane's second album. You couldn't miss it in the record stores. On the front cover is Herb Greene's black-and-white portrait of the band, posed in front of a wall in the photographer's studio that is covered in hieroglyphics-like graffiti. In the photo, most of the musicians are holding instruments they do not know how to play. Across the top of the cover, in ornate, filigreed capital lettering, is the title. At the bottom right, in much smaller type, superimposed over the banjo that drummer Spencer Dryden is holding, is the band's name. The cover, designed by the band's founder and singer Marty Balin, is bubblegum pink.

"I did the cover in blue, and when it came out, it was pink," recalls Balin. "RCA changed things; nobody ever asked us."

The first single taken from the album was My Best Friend, composed by the Airplane's recently departed drummer Skip Spence, backed with How Do You Feel, penned by Tom Mastin, a friend of the album's producer, Rick Jarrard, as well as an acquaintance of Kantner's from his pre-Airplane folk music days. Released in January, it made an unimpressive Number 103.

Clearly, the two slower-paced songs were not what the national record buyers were expecting from the group that was described as the epitome of San Francisco's acid rock.

The album itself also got off to a slow start, nudging into Billboard's Top LPs chart at Number 137 in the issue dated March 25. (It was a good week for West Coast debuts – the first albums by LA's Doors and Buffalo Springfield also arrived.) But the national hype on the Airplane was building considerably, stimulated by a January press blitz and coverage of the Be-In, as well as a trip to New York when they played a two-week run of shows at the hip Café Au-Go-Go.

Surrealistic Pillow began its rapid ascent up the chart in early April, as the second single from the album, Somebody To Love – written by Grace Slick's brother-in-law Darby Slick when the two of them were in The Great Society – began its own run on the Hot 100 singles chart. The single vaulted steadily upward until June, when it peaked at Number 5. Jefferson Airplane, whose music was supposed to be an antidote to the commercial pop on the ➢

radio, suddenly found themselves with a hit single being played on nearly every rock'n'roll station in the country.

Boosted by the heavy airplay devoted to the single, *Surrealistic Pillow* continued to sell steadily, ultimately reaching Number 3 in August. Had it not been for The Beatles, who released their era-defining *Sgt. Pepper* in June, and for The Monkees, whose third album, *Headquarters*, lodged stubbornly at Number 2, the Airplane would have had the most popular album in the country during the fabled Summer of Love.

"I GOT DISGUSTED BY THE EGO TRIPS. THE BAND WAS SO STONED I COUDN'T TALK TO THEM."

MARTY BALIN

WHITE RABBIT
PLASTIC FANTASTIC LOVER
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE
RCA VICTOR
47-9248
SOMEBODY TO LOVE
(from the RCA Victor album LPM-3766 "Surrealistic Pillow")
(Darby Slick)
47-9140
45 RPM
RCA VICTOR
2:54
Producer Rick Jarrard
JEFFERSON AIRPLANE

The group's manager, Bill Graham, naturally wanted to capitalise on all the attention by setting up as many dates as possible. The Airplane loved nothing more than playing live, but Graham's philosophy of keeping the band on the road almost continuously, and playing in his own rooms when they were in San Francisco, was wearying to some of the Airplane, who preferred a more leisurely regime. The hectic pace caused friction within the band, with Grace and Spencer, in particular, objecting to the heavy schedule.

With the hit single and album, media hype now came with little effort. In its May 30 issue, Look, one of the most popular national periodicals at the time, devoted four pages to an article titled "Jefferson Airplane Loves You". The author, who largely avoided the men in the group, repeatedly called Grace "Gracie", coining a nickname she soon came to detest.

That spring, the Airplane also made their first major TV appearances since Grace had joined the band. In early May, they taped The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, a progressively minded show in tune with the Airplane's core audience. The band, a light show pulsating behind it, performed Somebody To Love and their latest hit, Grace's Alice In Wonderland-meets-Sketches Of Spain bolero White Rabbit. Afterwards, co-host Tom Smothers and the Airplane hung out together and, invariably, out came the guitars and sacramental herb.

Tom Smothers: "I always said, Thank God I had a brother who was super straight, and a show that required that I work under a certain quality of attention. If I'd been running with the bands, I'd probably be dead."

The Airplane also guested on the granddaddy of all rock'n'roll TV programmes, Dick Clark's American Bandstand. The show aired on June 3, with both Somebody To Love and White Rabbit lip-synced, as was the Bandstand custom. Being sports, the band played along, Paul, Jorma and Jack tearing into their guitars with abandon, Spencer bobbing his head left to right as was his wont, Marty looking dour stuck behind a piano, and Grace giving her most piercing, blasé stare.

"They were terrific," recalled Dick Clark. "I was excited and the kids were excited because they were so hot. White Rabbit wasn't on the chart when they appeared. It went on two or three weeks later, but Somebody To Love had been on and was a two-month-old record, so they were very familiar with it. I remember that Grace had on a Little Red Riding Hood outfit. She was extraordinarily beautiful, very mannequin-like."

When White Rabbit was released on June 6, the Airplane was already in the studio in Hollywood working on their next album. But before that, at some point during the spring, they had recorded a track that would land them in hot water. Levi Strauss, the blue jeans manufacturer, had approached the band about creating a series of radio ads. The company promised to give the Airplane free rein with the spots – they could go into the studio and do whatever they liked, as long as they mentioned the product.

The group recorded at least four commercials. One featured Grace, wailing passionately over an Eastern-sounding group improvisation, insisting that white Levi's came in blue and black, tossing in non-sequiturs about cactus and whiskey. The other, conceived by Spencer and the band's friend Gary Blackman, was Frank Zappa-influenced: electronics, a mock '50s Dada-esque rant, the occasional something having to do with jeans.

To the Airplane, agreeing to the spots was no big deal – they wore Levi's and perhaps even saw this infiltration of the advertising industry as a somewhat revolutionary act. But a handful of radicals viewed the move as a sell-out: to Abbie Hoffman, a founder of the fledgling Yippie Party, the ads were morally abhorrent.

In a letter to New York's Village Voice in May 1967, Hoffman wrote: "It summarised for me all the doubts I have about the hippy philosophy. I realise they are just doing their 'thing' but while Jefferson Airplane grooves with its thing, over 100 workers in the Levi Strauss plant on the Tennessee-Georgia border are doing their thing, which consists of being on strike to protest deplorable working conditions."

When the band learned about the labour dispute, it opted not to record any more jingles for the company, and Levi's let the Airplane out of their contract rather than risk having them bad-mouth the brand.

WORK ON THE NEW ALBUM HAD begun on May 22, 1967, with the recording of another new song by Kantner intriguingly called The Ballad Of You & Me & Pooneil, the third party in the title being a fusion of two of Paul's greatest inspirations, A.A. Milne's lovable bear, Winnie The Pooh, and folk singer Fred Neil.

From its first seconds, Pooneil is like nothing the Airplane had previously recorded. It blasts off with an eardrum-shattering detonation of feedback from Jorma, then shifts into a quick-paced stomp punctuated by staccato bursts of guitar. There's a new freedom to the sound that was missing from the carefully manicured and pristine-sounding *Pillow*. The playing is carefree and improvisational – just like the Airplane's live performances.

Rather than attempting to coax another tidy, commercial set out of the Airplane, RCA allowed the group to run with its own instincts and made no effort to dictate direction. That very lack of interference was a feather in the label's cap, as it gave the Airplane the leeway they needed to grow artistically.

"[Up until then] we kind of inflicted ourselves into the process but we didn't overtake it," recalls Paul Kantner, who died in January 2016. "By the third album we were doing acid in the studio, and bringing in motorcycles and nitrous oxide tanks. We got away with stuff just by doing it."

After Bathing At Baxter's, as the new album came to be called, was wholly indicative of the band's rapid evolution. Much of the credit for its far-sightedness can be shared with the Airplane's new producer. In Al Schmitt they found a sympathetic ear, someone who not only understood the band's need to be free to create and keep pushing, at their own pace, but who also got along with the Airplane on a personal level.

Schmitt had been the first RCA staffer to see the Airplane perform, and it was he who'd recommended the label sign the band. But until now his other commitments at the company had made him unavailable to produce them.

Leg up: pysched out in '67.; "everyone was in their little shell," says Balin.

Getty

Schmitt had become an RCA staff engineer in 1959, his credits including Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, jazz greats Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan, and the mega-selling Peter Gunn soundtrack album, as well as rock artists such as Duane Eddy. From the start of the *Baxter's* sessions, Schmitt and the Airplane agreed on how to make records. Basically, that boiled down to leaving the musicians alone, Schmitt's role being to help them capture their ideas on tape.

Anticipating a long recording process, the Airplane rented a house in Beverly Hills (once occupied briefly by The Beatles) and commenced work, with Schmitt's younger brother Rich replacing Dave Hassinger, engineer on their previous two albums. Using the newly developed 8-track recording technology for the first time, much of the album was moulded directly from studio experimentation – the band fooled around and, eventually, something emerged.

Marty and Paul's Young Girl Sunday Blues – written about the same person who'd inspired Come Up The Years on *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*, their debut album – was the second song they attempted, but the band couldn't get it right. So they took a live version of the song recorded at the Fillmore Auditorium, stripped off the lead vocal in the studio, and had Marty record a new one. The result was perfect, a natural-sounding, bittersweet love song.

That song would prove to be Marty's only writing contribution to the album. After dominating *Takes Off* and supplying *Surrealistic Pillow* with some of its most memorable songs, he essentially sat this one out while Paul and Grace took over the bulk of the writing. Marty's writer's block was compounded as he found himself increasingly on the receiving end of jabs from Jorma and Jack about his love-oriented lyrics, which they found trite.

Marty's partial withdrawal from the creative process should have served as early notice to the others that the founder of their band was beginning to feel stifled. But, as Marty recalls, no one other than him seemed to notice that anything was amiss within the Airplane's insular world. Even as he became more sullen and silent, no-one asked what was bothering him.

Marty Balin: "I got disgusted with all the ego trips and the band was so stoned out I couldn't even talk to them. Everybody was in their little shell."

If the beginning of the band's long demise can be traced this far back, to 1967 – the very year that the Airplane first experienced success on a wide scale and a period when they should have been having the time of their lives – two developments can probably be blamed. One was the introduction of cocaine and other hard drugs to the scene, and the other was the tendency of the band members to form factions: in one corner were lovers Grace and Spencer (and sometimes Paul), and in another old friends Jorma and Jack. All alone in the middle, fending for himself and tired of being the referee, was Marty Balin. It was the Summer of Love, and the most famous of the San Francisco bands, the designated emissaries of peace and love, could not seem to get along.

THE TOUR BUSES HAD BEGUN ROLLING DOWN Haight Street around April 1967. The Hippy Hop, they called it. With their cameras sticking out of the windows, visitors could now gawk at the aliens – genuine San Francisco hippies! – from a safe distance. "Look at the hair on that one, Maude! Is it a boy or a girl? They all look like they're on something!"

Thousands of young people, many of them runaways, were streaming into the Haight-Ashbury district, with no end to the incursion in sight. A carnival atmosphere overtook the Haight, and the only entertainment one needed could be found right on the street, day and night. But to many Haight-Ashbury pioneers who had watched the phenomenon unfold, this sudden influx of newcomers did not spell a final victory over antiquated lifestyles, or a new American way, but rather the beginning of the end. The greater the number of thumbs and Volkswagen Bugs pointing towards San Francisco from all points east, north and south, the more difficult it became for the Haight to maintain its community spirit.

As more and more immigrants arrived, the hungry vultures swooped closer: the boutiques and head shops were soon joined on Haight Street by dives selling "Love Burgers", and by hollow-eyed wastrels dealing hard drugs.

The problems within the Haight expanded exponentially. Before long, there was nowhere to put all of the new arrivals, and no way to feed or care for them. Recently organised operations like the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic and the Haight-Ashbury Legal Organisation dealt with the situation as best they could, dispensing free health care and legal assistance. But there was no stemming the tide of opportunists, entrepreneurs, burn-outs and outright thugs moving in alongside what had been a tight-knit population of artists, activists, anarchists, intellectuals and seekers.

Marty Balin: "It was really pretty and beautiful there for a year or two and then Time magazine came out and they were ➢

Dog gone: the Airplane backstage at an event staged by "anti-business" promoters Family Dog, February 1970; below at Monterey Pop festival, June 18, 1967.

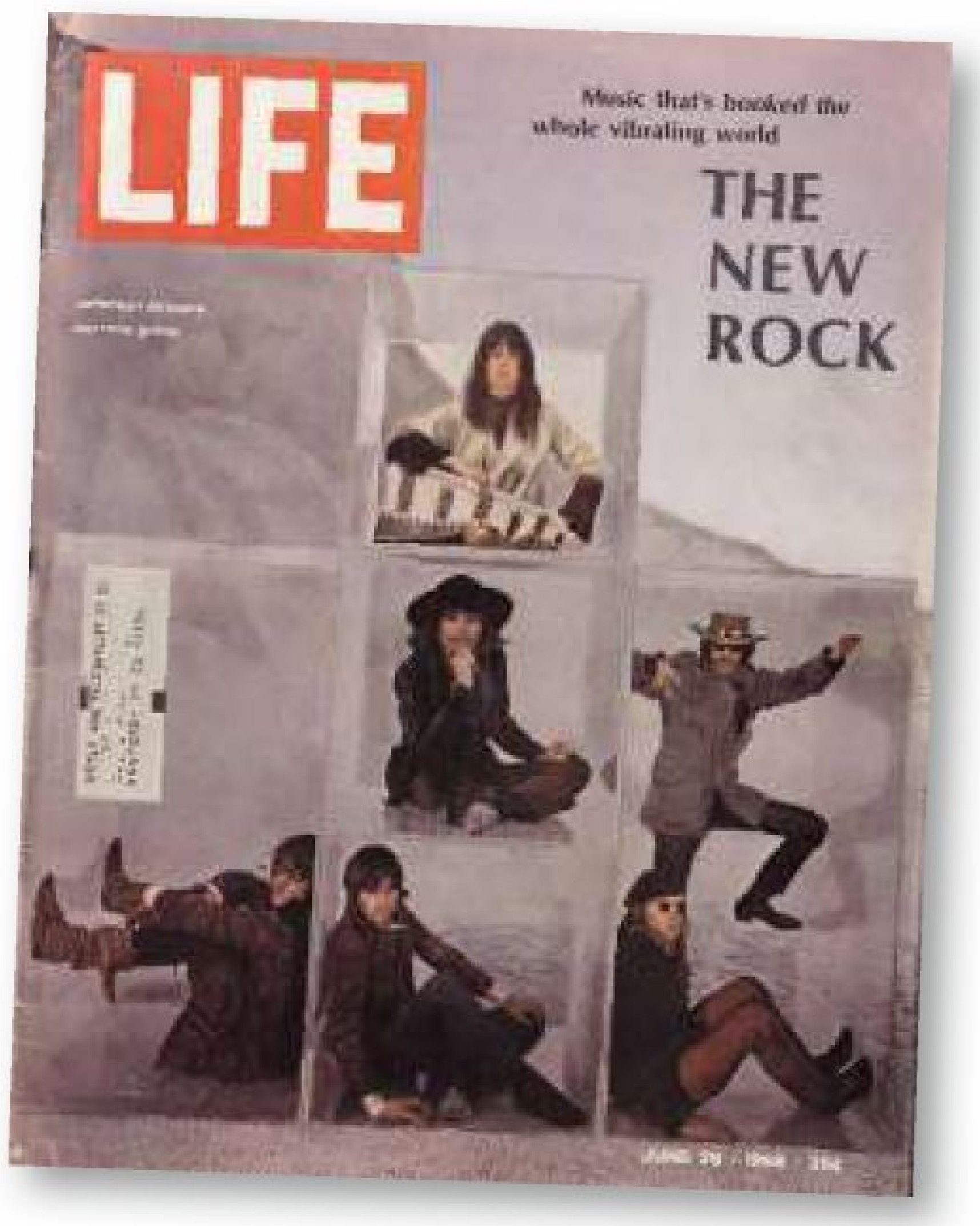
interviewing me. I told the guy, This is great that you're publicising this beautiful-feeling scene out here. He said, 'Fastest way to kill it.' He was right."

The curious flocked from everywhere. In April, Beatle Paul McCartney had visited San Francisco for the day, stopping by to meet the Airplane. Two years earlier Marty Balin and Paul Kantner were first learning how to rock'n'roll by listening to Beatles records – now here was McCartney, seeking them out. He had been knocked out by their music, particularly Jack's bass playing.

"THERE WAS THIS STUPID MEDIA ATTENTION ON GRACE. SHE JUST WANTED TO BE ONE OF THE GUYS."

SPENCER DRYDEN

★ ★ ★ ★



After some small talk during a break in an Airplane rehearsal, Paul, Marty, Jack, Jorma and future Airplane manager Bill Thompson showed McCartney around San Francisco.

Marty Balin: "I said, Well, what's new with The Beatles? He said, 'Well, I have a tape here with something new.' It was A Day In The Life. Imagine, being a little stoned, with McCartney, hearing that for the first time. I about died."

"I remember we were smoking grass," recalls Bill Thompson, who passed away in 2015. "I said, What's happening in England? Anybody new coming along? And he said, 'Man, there's an unbelievable guy named Jimi Hendrix.'"

The Airplane would have a chance to find out just how unbelievable Jimi Hendrix was at the Monterey International Pop Festival in June. Hendrix's show-stopping performance, along with those of The Who, Otis Redding, Ravi Shankar and Airplane cohort Janis Joplin, helped catapult the festival to rock milestone status, and made Monterey a high point of the Summer of Love.

Introduced on-stage at the Monterey County Fairgrounds by the Dead's Jerry Garcia as "a perfect example of what the world is coming to", the Airplane, as did nearly all of the other artists, played an abbreviated set, showcasing their best-known material. With Glenn McKay's Headlights, one of the newer San Francisco light shows, pulsating on the screen behind them, they were among the festival's highlights.

Documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker included two of their pieces – the then unreleased High Flying Bird, a gorgeously melodic, melancholic folk song, written by West Virginian Billy Edd Wheeler, and *Pillow*'s Today – in Monterey Pop, the film that came to theatres the following year. For the first song, the cameras focus primarily on the band's three main vocalists as they trade riffs, offering a close-up of the Slick-Balin dynamic in action. Marty sticks close to the lyric, Grace dances around it, and when the two meet, they become one. But Today is a perplexing few minutes of cinema. Although Marty is the sole lead vocalist on the ballad, Grace and Paul joining only for harmonies, the camera never leaves Slick. Seated at her keyboard, she is lost in the music. Her lips move, but Marty's voice emerges.

"That was all of the stupid media focus on Grace," said Spencer Dryden, who died in 2005. "She wanted to be one of the guys. But how could you not think that she would be the focus?"

Marty Balin: "You don't even see me. When the movie came out, I was really hurt. I was young and I was like, Awwww, I sing the whole song and I don't even get to be seen."

Grace Slick: "I just thought any time you have four goats and one pig, you're gonna look at the pig. I didn't think it was anything other than I was a girl."

D.A. Pennebaker: "It was a dumb problem. We didn't know until we sent the film up [to be processed] that there was no microphone on her. And the only lighting was not on him, but on her. We thought we could get by on psychedelic."

But Monterey would be one for the group to savour. Whatever was happening at home to cause the Haight to descend, whatever was happening out in the frightening real world of war and strife, for three days and nights in Monterey, it was forgotten. Most who were there remember Monterey being honest and spontaneous, smiles and colours, high and happy. It was about music, but it was also about more than that. On the last night of the festival, Jimi Hendrix, something apparently from another galaxy, announced that rock'n'roll had just gone to the next level.

David Crosby: "I remember Paul Kantner and I and David Freiberg of Quicksilver watching Jimi Hendrix, and going, 'You can't do that. That's impossible. What is he? Waitaminute! Holy shit!'"

Late Sunday, some of the musicians still had adrenalin (and then some) inside of them. Jack wandered over to a hut near the arena, spied Hendrix – zonked on a few hits of Owsley acid – plunking at a bass, and joined him in a duet that must have been something to behold. When the sun came up, everyone returned home.

AFTER MONTEREY THEY NEEDED TO get serious about *Baxter's*. At the end of June, the band went back into the studio to finish up Pooneil and to cut Grace's Two Heads, one of the two songs she contributed to the album. Two Heads, like much of Grace's songwriting, seemed capable of conveying great insights when placed under a microscope, each line worthy of serious pondering. But viewed under a different lens, those same words might seem nothing more than drug-induced gibberish.

As such, despite the band's two recent Top 10 hits, it was an improbable choice for most AM radio stations' playlists. Jorma's sinuous, Middle Eastern-inspired guitar line was pure psychedelia, and added to Grace's elliptic verse, it made for a beautiful, rapturous piece of music, but hardly the stuff of hit singles. Compared to The Beatles' recent work, like the ultra-trippy Strawberry Fields Forever, this was weird – and the Airplane, popular though they were, could not get away with things The Beatles could.

In late August the band returned to the studio to work on the ebullient springtime skip of Martha, one of a half-dozen songs written in part or wholly for the album by the suddenly prolific Kantner, and Kaukonen's The Last Wall Of The Castle. The latter was a supercharged break-up blues, possessed of an embedded moralistic twist, and doubling as a showcase for Jorma's blistering fuzz guitar soloing.

Guitar and amplification technology had much to do with where rock music was heading. The Airplane guitarists were constantly upgrading their equipment, buying the newest models and the loudest, most durable amps, ceaselessly reinventing themselves.

Jorma Kaukonen: "It was a growth period. I was starting to use multiple amplifiers. There are different kinds of fuzztones and the wah-wah pedal, which was a really integral part of my sound for a number of years. It certainly does evoke that period. You hear a wah-wah and you're thinking Cream and Strange Brew."

Cream: Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, virtuoso musicians in an English hard-rock/blues power trio, whose Strange Brew had been another of the Summer of Love's great musical achievements. The effect the group had on Jorma Kaukonen and Jack Casady was profound. *After Bathing At Baxter's* – 'baxter' being band code for LSD – was released on November 27, 1967, and would steer the band towards a heavier sound. Jefferson Airplane would never be the same again.

Jeff Tamarkin is the author of the acclaimed Got A Revolution! The Turbulent Flight Of Jefferson Airplane.

Alamy

OUT OF OUR HEADS

The Hollywood 'acid test' took place on February 25, 1966, where costumed revellers danced late into the night while on LSD; (right) a novice adventurer experiences a bad trip.

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FREAK OUT!

TOM WOLFE*'s The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test – which immortalised* **KEN KESEY** *and* **THE MERRY PRANKSTERS***' 1966 psychedelic road trip – now goes technicolor.*

A JUST-PUBLISHED, GLOSSY COLLECTOR'S EDITION OF THE Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test revisits the Pranksters' tale, with new photographs, photo-essays, reproductions of Wolfe's original manuscripts and posters, handbills and mementos. The inspiration for Wolfe's original book was photo-journalist Lawrence Schiller's inside account of the acid scene for Life magazine in March '66. Wolfe then wrote a story on Kesey for The New York Herald with pictures by photo-journalist Ted Streshinsky. Schiller and Streshinsky have both collaborated on this new edition.

These stories and photographs also document the heyday of Janis Joplin, The Grateful Dead and the whole Haight-Ashbury scene, but also the American drug experience long before Monterey and the rise of the so-called hippie culture. It documents the last fling of Kerouac's beat generation, the transition from jazz to rock, and an era when nobody outside a small clique of truth'n'thrill-seekers even knew what LSD was.

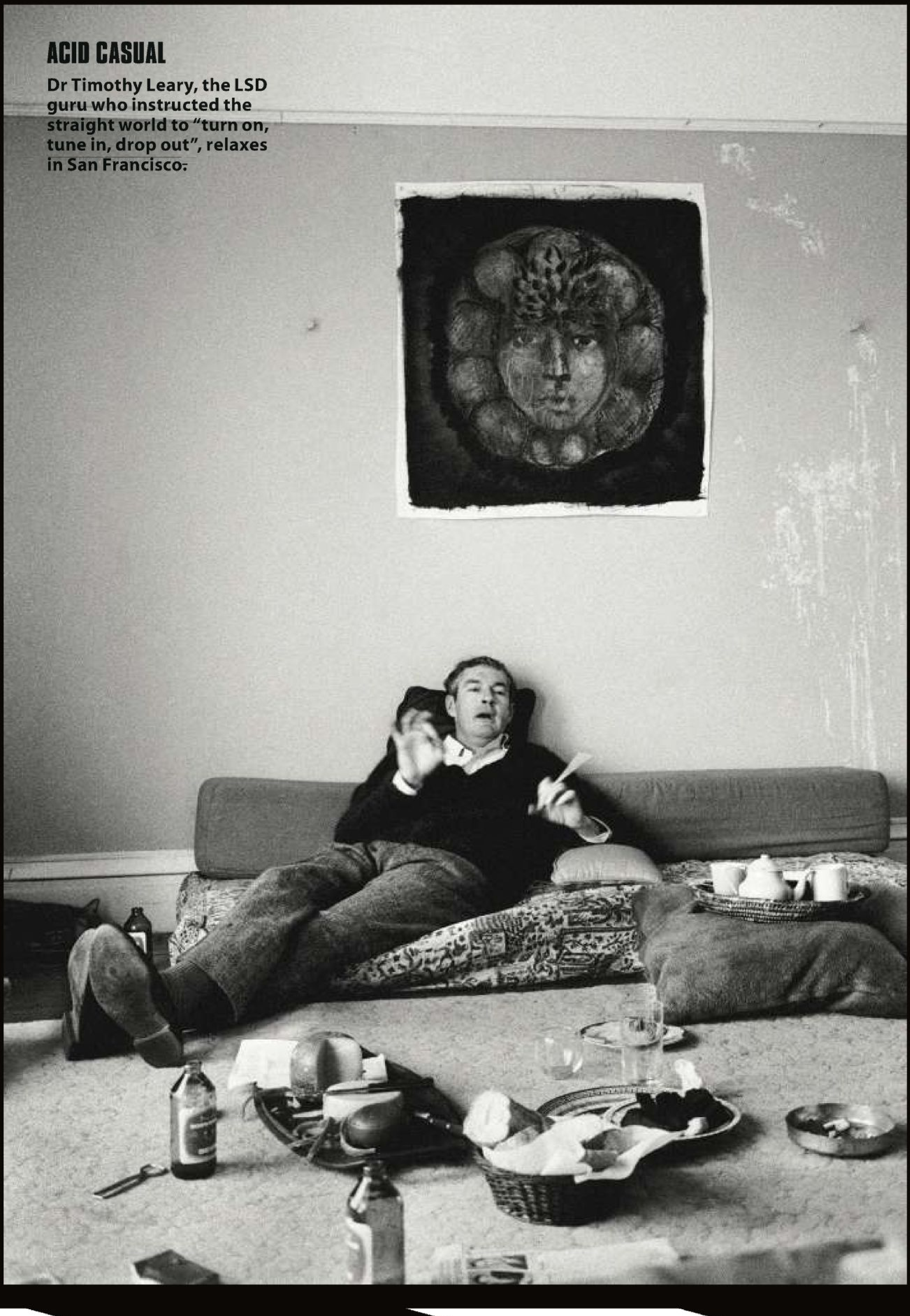
Among Schiller and Streshinsky's images are some of the earliest known pictures of LSD users under the influence. "A few liked to advertise their rebellion," explained Shiller, "and liked to be photographed in the act."

Meanwhile, Tom Wolfe's striking prose documented the whole extraordinary experience. Wolfe was there on the other side of the glass in San Mateo County jail after Kesey was imprisoned for fleeing multiple marijuana busts, faking suicide and going on the run in Mexico. And he was there when Kesey and his Pranksters threw their famous acid parties.

Here are some of the new book's photographic highlights…

Tom Wolfe's The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test is published by Taschen as a collector's edition of 1,768 numbered copies signed by the author, and as an art edition of 100 copies, each with a signed photographic print. Go to www.taschen.com for more information.

TOM WOLFE
THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST
LAWRENCE SCHILLER
TED STRESHINSKY
TASCHEN



ACID CASUAL

Dr Timothy Leary, the LSD guru who instructed the straight world to "turn on, tune in, drop out", relaxes in San Francisco.

ASHBURY
1500
← 1500
HAIGHT

DEAD COOL

Tom Wolfe arrived in Haight-Ashbury in October ’66 to begin writing his story. Here he is (right) with The Grateful Dead’s frontman Jerry Garcia (centre) and manager Rock Scully.

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SUNDAY

VISITING DAY

Ed McClannahan brings me up some NOTEBOOKS and pens, PLUS Gordon comes to visit but is turned away, not being on my list but as he leaves he gives a small bottle of yellow paint to the dude working the parking lot!

An all round day for getting ripped.

Good old Gordon comes along -- risks his already stuck-out necks for his good buddie who got burned some goods

SSSSSSGHHHH I mean like

WHO

??????

WAS IT THAT SNATCHED THE CREAM

After VISITING IS OVER THIS DUDE TELLS ME OF THE TRANSACTION AND THAT HE PUT THE BOTTLE IN MY LOCKER. I dont like the sound of it some way and hustle the bottle down to the hobby shop, check, and beneath the yellow paint is about a lid of grass in a plastic bag. I stash it in the garbage for tempora but on the way back to the barracks run into the dude who copped it for me from 9. He wants a couple joints for his trouble. I still dont like the sound of it but fair's fair so we go back to the garbage can in the Hobby shop and the paint bottle is gone! Hmm. All very wierd.

IN AS MY NOTEBOOKS WERE SUBJECT TO BE SCRUTINIZED AT ANY TIME A LOCKER CHECK MIGHT HAVE BEEN CALLED I KNEW I MUST KEEP CERTAIN NOTES A BIT VAGUE

Listen

Deaf

CLOSE

Listen

For

CANDY BAR

TROUBLE

JAIL

JAIL JOY

SEE

WISHES

tho I get burn on the DOPE ... I get to see FAMILY

AND ALL KINDS OF SOUND AND COLOR WHICH I TAKE TO THE TAILOR SHOP. BUT ITS A LITTLE SLOW AT THE SHOP. ESPECIALLY WITH ALL THE ACTION UP AT THE BARRACKS.

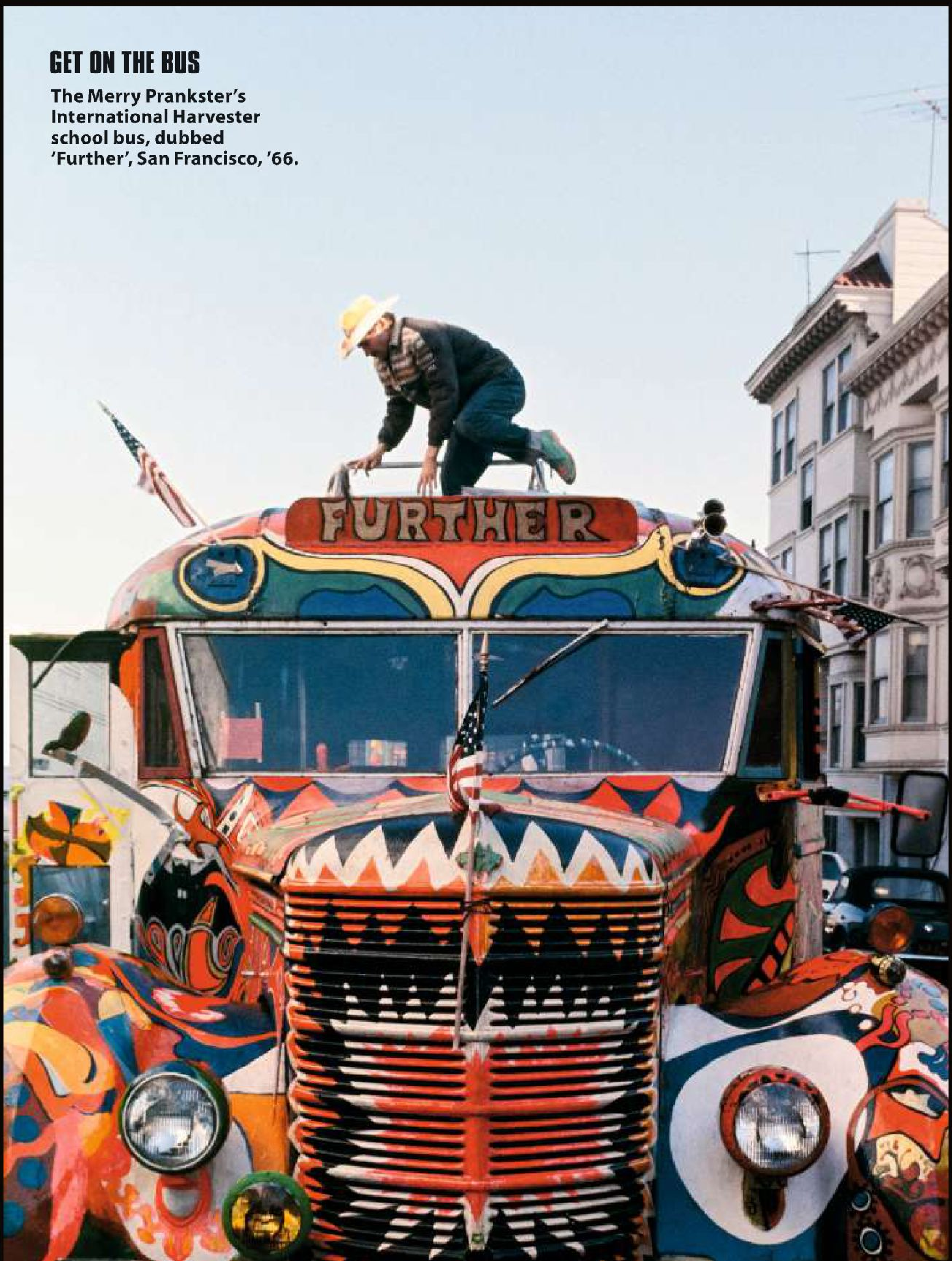
A MA
HANG
THE
SU
G

OR TO FAC

BRILLIANT MIND

Pages from Ken Kesey's journals, 1967. "I'd rather be a lightning rod than a seismograph," he told Wolfe.

Reproduced with permission from The Ken Kesey Estate; © Ted Streshinsky Photographic Archive



GET ON THE BUS

The Merry Prankster's International Harvester school bus, dubbed 'Further', San Francisco, '66.

BB

Seventy years ago **B.B. KING** *arrived in Memphis, Tennessee,*
and found himself in the eye of the musical hurricane that would give birth to the electric blues. **PAUL TRYNKA** *charts the journey of the lead guitar great who died last year.*

Getty

Gibson

Portrait of the artist as a young man: the teenage B.B. King, dreaming of Memphis's bright lights.

MEMPHIS

has played host to countless moments that changed the course of music. It's the only city in the world where such chalk-and-cheese cultural landmarks as Elvis's Graceland and Al Green's Full Gospel Tabernacle can comfortably co-exist within a few blocks of each other – and B.B. King was one of the men who made it happen.

Immortalised as one of the founding fathers of the city's rock'n'roll heritage, King was himself a living repository of the neglected geniuses who formed his inspiration.

In 1946 Riley King fled to the city after wrecking a tractor at work; panicking about what his plantation boss's reaction would be, he left Indianola to find his cousin Bukka White in Memphis. His first visit was a fleeting recce; two years later he would return, a shy youth, nonetheless stubbornly intent on making his mark in one of the world's most competitive musical environments.

By January 1952 this slim, stuttering figure would be notching up his first national hit. B.B.'s career from then on would be a testament to his enduring fortitude and hard work; but for those three years, the credit belongs to Memphis, and its incredible cast of musical trailblazers and mavericks.

WHEN MOJO WENT KNOCKING FOR B.B. KING IN 1997, he was a sprightly 72. Slimmer than a decade before, the lines on his skinnier face made him look rather more like the hardest-working man in show business than he used to. Famously polite, he was also terse in the extreme, until he started reliving the days when he was wearing shorts ("I read about them in Esquire magazine!") and hanging out with Robert Lockwood and Rice Miller. The man who'd carried the blues to every continent broke into a beam as he recalled how Memphis was calling to him right from his earliest memories.

"I was excited, very excited, about that city. I'd heard a lot about it, my first guitar book was ordered from Memphis, because [catalogue company] Sears, Roebuck had this big store there. They had catalogues that you could see all these instruments. My thoughts about Memphis were just, Oh, that it was this huge place, a big city with music stores, record stores, places you could buy instruments, all the kind of things that I didn't have where I lived.

"It's hard to believe now, but Bukka White must have been in his late teens when he used to come and see my mother. He was my mother's first cousin. He was a great guy in our eyes. We kids loved him because he was funny, always dressed nice and neat, and he would bring us candy! He was always kind, but he'd never sit down and show me anything about guitar. I say that because I keep reading he did."

In any case, King's guilt at leaving his family cut short his first visit to Memphis, and he returned home to face the music over the pranged tractor.

Alamy

> "MEMPHIS WAS THIS HUGE PLACE WITH MUSIC AND RECORD STORES, INSTRUMENTS, THINGS I DIDN'T HAVE WHERE I LIVED."

By 1946 Memphis had already been through one music boom, but there was another on the way. The first sign that most Mississippi music fans picked up on was the buzz surrounding KFFA's new King Biscuit Time radio show. Radio was in its exciting infancy, and the comparatively liberal legislator, the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), imposed anti-discrimination rules which meant that any prospective presenter who came to a station with a suitable sponsor would be guaranteed a spot. And that's exactly what Rice Miller and Robert Lockwood did in 1941.

Max Moore, an Arkansas businessman, had been producing the King Biscuit brand of flour since 1931 without making any noticeable impact on the local market when Miller approached him with the idea of a sponsored show. Miller had been rambling around the Mississippi Delta for over a decade, and had played on and off with Lockwood since 1936; for his radio persona he 'assumed' the name of Sonny Boy Williamson, relying on the fact that the genuine article, John Lee 'Sonny Boy' Williamson, was safely distant in Chicago.

Robert Lockwood had learned guitar from his mother's lover, Robert Johnson, and had recently become one of the first musicians in the South to use the newfangled electric guitar. The two musicians' half-hour slot was the first electric blues radio programme in the US. Within months they'd gathered tens of thousands of listeners and King Biscuit flour was flying off the shelves. As long-term KFFA announcer Sonny Payne points out, "Back in those days we were on 250 watts and of course you didn't have too much interference from the other radio stations – because there weren't any. The nearest one was Memphis in one direction and, I think, WWL out of New Orleans in the other. We would go anywhere from 75 to 100 miles in four directions, and that's something you can't do today."

Riley King was one of hundreds of musicians who turned to electric blues after hearing Sonny Boy's show. By 1948 Sonny Boy had split with Lockwood and moved to a better-paying station, KWEM, situated over the river in West Memphis – a part of town where gambling, bootlegging and prostitution flourished under the less restrictive Arkansas regime. When in June of that year King decided to make a proper attempt at establishing himself in the city, Sonny Boy was an obvious port of call.

"I'd heard him a lot on the radio at home, 'cos we could pick up West Memphis radio in Indianola and I would listen to him every day at 12.15. He'd have 15 minutes ➢

KFFA
KING BISCUIT
FLOUR
BUY THE BEST
FORGET THE REST

Harlem shuffle: B.B. King and friends rock the Apollo Theatre, 1963; (left) Flour power (from left) Sonny Boy Williamson II, KFFA station owner Sam Anderson, Robert Lockwood, 1941.

between 12.15 and 12.30, and at the time it was as exciting as going to a concert for me, going home and hearing that show. So when I came back to Memphis the second time I felt like I knew him 'cos he was like a household word to us! So when I went over to West Memphis to the radio station where he worked, and when I got a chance to see him it seemed like, Hey, I'm seeing an old friend. He didn't know me from Adam, but I begged him to let me on his show, and he did, and it started from there."

For most writers and '60s musicians, the man who gave King, Howlin' Wolf and dozens of others their first break remains a cypher. Eric Clapton recalls thinking that Miller was "not very important – second division". Yet locals saw him as probably the most significant musician working around Memphis, as Little Milton Campbell pointed out: "Rice Miller was a hell of a musician. He's also the first harmonica player I ever saw blow the harmonica through his nose or through the corner of his mouth! He talked loud, and he had a big bluff going and if you didn't get to know him you would think, Who-ah, this guy's mean, he's vulgar. But deep down he was really a gentle soul. But he also knew what he wanted. He would tell you what to play and how to play it, and if you didn't he'd be on your butt."

The Sonny Boy scam that constituted King's first break is now legendary. Having double-booked himself for the night, Sonny Boy opted for the better-paying job, and sent the young Riley King in his place to play the 16th Street Grill. Rather than Sonny Boy's rough and ready Delta fare, the 16th Street audience was treated to King's smoother, eclectic mix: "I think I played some Louis Jordan, Nat Cole, Dinah Washington, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, T-Bone Walker, Lonnie Johnson. I never played anything like it really was, but I knew parts of the songs, so I just played those!"

Notwithstanding King's modesty, his show sufficiently impressed Grill boss Miss Annie for her to offer him a residency if he could get his own radio slot; within days he lined up a show sponsored by Pepticon tonic on WDIA, based on Union Street in Memphis proper. The contacts he established in the next few years would prove hugely influential, none more so than Rice Miller's erstwhile sparring partner, Robert Lockwood.

ROBERT LOCKWOOD WAS A LEGENDARILY ELUSIVE and difficult character. Tales abound of writers or industry figures who travelled thousands of miles to prearranged meetings with him, only to be told that they've made up the rendezvous and be called a liar to their face. He would precede interviews with a demand for hundreds of dollars because he was convinced that journalists made a fortune from him. He boasted that he was the one artist Leonard Chess never messed around because, "I knew too much. I told him a couple of times, If you do me like you do the other guys, I will blow your motherfucking head off."

Yet, when I met him in the late '90s, Lockwood turned up faith-

Getty (2)

"I WAS VERY LATE FOR A GIG AND IKE TURNER TOLD ME, 'YOU'S A MESS – I BETTER SIT IN WITH YOU.'"

[redacted]

≺ fully for the annual King Biscuit Time Festival in Helena, Arkansas that celebrates his and Sonny Boy's contribution to American culture. When he recently had been given a special award at the festival, he wore his usual proud, enigmatic expression. Only those standing close could see a large tear well up in his eye, and trickle down his cheek.

Lockwood explained his career by pointing out that his adopted father, Robert Johnson, was "60 years ahead of his own time, and when he taught me he put me 60 years ahead of my time too". He formed the Delta's first small electric band with Miller; he was one of the first to recognise the potential of the electric guitar as a lead instrument and in later years he would perform a pivotal role as a rhythm guitarist on many Chess recordings. What's less well-known is his part in launching King's career. At a time when King was blundering towards a more sophisticated blues sound, Lockwood, who'd already grown tired of the basic down-home Delta stomp, was on hand.

"Memphis as a city wasn't quite as big as it is now," declared Lockwood, "but they had wide-open gambling there. They had a place called the Midway, and the Brown Derby, and they had the Citizens something-or-other on Beale Street, operated by [Sunbeam] Mitchell who booked us for a long time. All the bands I ever had was people who could play old standards, so we were playing tunes like After You Gone, Stardust, Jumping At The Woodside, Good Enough To Keep – that's a Charlie Christian number. I never liked to sit up and only play three changes all day. So we were listening to Ray Holloway, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis, a lot of those jazz guys."

Hence, even as Muddy Waters was perfecting his electrified Delta blues up in Chicago, back in Memphis the sound had already moved on ("Muddy? Muddy Waters never done no improving," sneered Lockwood). When King hooked up with Lockwood and his band he discovered a powerful resource.

"Meeting Robert Jr Lockwood was real exciting, because his name was like a household word too… a great person," King reminisced. "He's a genius with chords and he taught me a lot – indirectly. He'd never just sit down and show me things. He would if I'd have asked, but I was mostly too ashamed. I didn't pick his brains like I should have, I would have been much better if I did. But if he heard me do something that he thought wasn't good, he'd always tell me, and to me that's really a friend.

"I only played alone for about two or three months after I got my radio job. I was never very good at playing alone, I'm still not. I need a cushion to ride on, so after two or three months I started a trio with piano and drums, then Robert Jr, I think, was the first guitarist that just stayed with me. When he came in, it gave me something unique. He knew all the right chords, but he wasn't just playing one, four and five like a lot of us do, he had the 9th chords, the 11th, the 13th, the everything!"

Over their time together, King and Lockwood established the beginnings of an archetypal rock partnership: the lead and rhythm guitar. It was partly a matter of necessity – B.B. claims to be incapable of playing guitar and singing at the same time – but the flexibility of their two-guitar approach allowed King to develop his pioneering lead guitar technique, developing a unique finger vibrato in an attempt to echo cousin Bukka's slide style.

THERE WERE DOZENS OF OTHER LEGENDARY NAMES stomping on Beale who would influence the young King. Robert Nighthawk was another pioneering electric guitarist whose trademark song, Sweet Black Angel, King would adapt as Sweet Little Angel. Bill Harvey was the street's best known bandleader, and like many older musicians had a soft spot for young Riley, who was becoming known around town as 'Blues Boy', or B.B. for short. Bass player Tuff Green led another hot band, which included Phineas Newborn and his child prodigy sons, Phineas Jr and Calvin. King enlisted Green's band to help out on his first, stumbling attempts at recording, four songs taped at the WDIA studio and released on Bullet, a small Texas label run by a friend of WDIA boss Bert Ferguson. There was singer Bobby Bland and pianist Johnny Ace – and then there was a man called Ike Turner.

As Memphis music exploded into the mainstream, Ike Turner seemed to be at the centre of it all. He'd played piano on Howlin' Wolf's monstrous Moanin' At Midnight, and was the guiding light behind Rocket 88, an epochal hit single that was credited to Jackie Brenston.

Ike was without doubt the region's foremost operator. According to King, he started to help him out purely because the sight of an untogether fellow musician pained him: "I was late for a gig, and Ike told me, 'You's a mess – I better sit in with you.'" Given little choice, King assented, and was rewarded a few months later when Turner recommended him to Modern Records' Bihari Brothers. A few weeks later he was called down to Sun studios on Union Street.

LOWELL FULSON TENDED TO SIT AT HOME IN Palmdale, California, while his friend B.B. ventured out across the world. Lowell liked it that way. Fulson's own career included big hits such as Reconsider Baby and Tramp – later covered or sampled by Otis Redding, Prince, Salt-n-Pepa and others – but the ambition of someone like B.B. was foreign to him. That's probably why he gave B.B. his first hit (another B.B. standard, Everyday I Have The Blues, is based on Lowell's reworking of a Memphis Slim song), throwing the songwriting credit into the deal.

By the time Fulson met him, King was established as one of WDIA's most popular DJs, spinning records by Louis Jordan, Nat Cole, Charles Brown, T-Bone Walker and others. He also kept a keen ear open for new talent: "B.B. was the onliest guy who would play my record on WDIA – the rest just laughed," Fulson remembered. "He asked me if he could record Three O'Clock Blues, and I told him he could have it. His show was 30 minutes and he played that record all the time, so when I played at the Hippodrome, we couldn't get everybody in there. Then all the jockeys wanted to talk to me. B.B. shows up and I says, Why don't you sing it, man, you take a go at it."

King remembered recording Lowell's song at the Memphis YMCA late in 1951, "wanting to put my own hurting on that beautiful song. But I can feel [B.B.'s legendary guitar] Lucille coming into her own on that song. It didn't make me rich and famous, but that record changed my life."

Three O' Clock Blues hit the R&B Number 1 spot the next February. The product of B.B.'s three-year love affair with Memphis, it also put Memphis on the map, signalling that the city was again as vibrant a musical centre as Chicago, to which so many of its mainstays had fled.

Buddy Guy, born in 1936, was just one of a new generation of kids that took note: "I still remember hearing it on the radio. This was something different. B.B. is the father of the squeezing of the string of the electric guitar. You could say he invented lead guitar. I often say, every electric guitar they make should have a 'B' on it. Everyone who came after, Eric, myself, Jeff Beck, we owe it to him."

For B.B., Three O'Clock Blues wasn't the end of his struggles. It was just the beginning. The influence he had on kids such as a young, "molasses-voiced, real polite" Elvis Presley would also, ironically, push him out of the limelight as a generation of white kids started recording the music he'd helped invent. But it didn't matter. B.B. had found a means to express himself, and if many of the names who helped him do so have been forgotten, they live on in his music.

"All I can say is I was one guy amongst many," King concluded. "There were so many musicians I didn't deserve to share a stage with. Maybe I was steadier. I owe Memphis. It's a special place."

Alamy

WOKE UP THIS MORNING

B.B. KING'*s distinctive style, and his catholic tastes, equipped him perfectly to reach out beyond his initial audience.* **PAUL TRYNKA** *counts down his ten best albums.*

10 BLUES SUMMIT

MCA, 1993

Was there a revered blues artist who didn't make an album of all-star duets in the late '80s and early '90s? Yet thanks to the presence of vintage peers like Lowell Fulson and John Lee Hooker, this collection harks back to the glorious cutting contests and packed bills of the chitlin circuit, and unlike 2005's mostly awful *B.B. King and Friends*, the feel is small-scale, intimate and fresh. The live collaborations inspire those involved – Little By Little, with Fulson, truly swings, and Call It Stormy Monday also features one of Albert Collins' finest latter-day performances. Koko Taylor, Etta James and Ruth Brown also star.

9 THE BEST OF THE KENT SINGLES

Ace, 2000

In contrast to many King compilations, this collection of King's earlier catalogue was assembled with Ace Records' characteristic love and expertise. These 25 tracks remind you that King was a potent singles artist over an extended period, packing in a string of R&B hits like Sweet Sixteen, Rock Me Baby and Five Long Years, broadening his style as tastes changed. The recordings are mono, no-frills, all designed for high-rotation play on jukeboxes across the USA, with a freshness and sparkle that still sings out today. Includes his take on Sonny Boy Williamson's Eyesight To The Blind, later to appear on The Who's *Tommy*.

8 THERE IS ALWAYS ONE MORE TIME

MCA, 1991

One could bemoan the fact B.B. never made a truly stripped-down album like the latter-day Johnny Cash. But that's partly because B.B. never quite lost his recording mojo. This album, like many of King's 1980s releases, was produced by Stewart Levine, who was responsible for something of a B.B. King comeback with 1978's *Midnight Believer*. Apart from the irritating '90s drum sound, this is a fine depiction of the elder statesman, including the magnificent Doc Pomus title track. The guitar work is solid, the voice a thing of beauty, and the slickness of songs like Fool Me Once makes for great driving music.

7 HIS DEFINITIVE GREATEST HITS

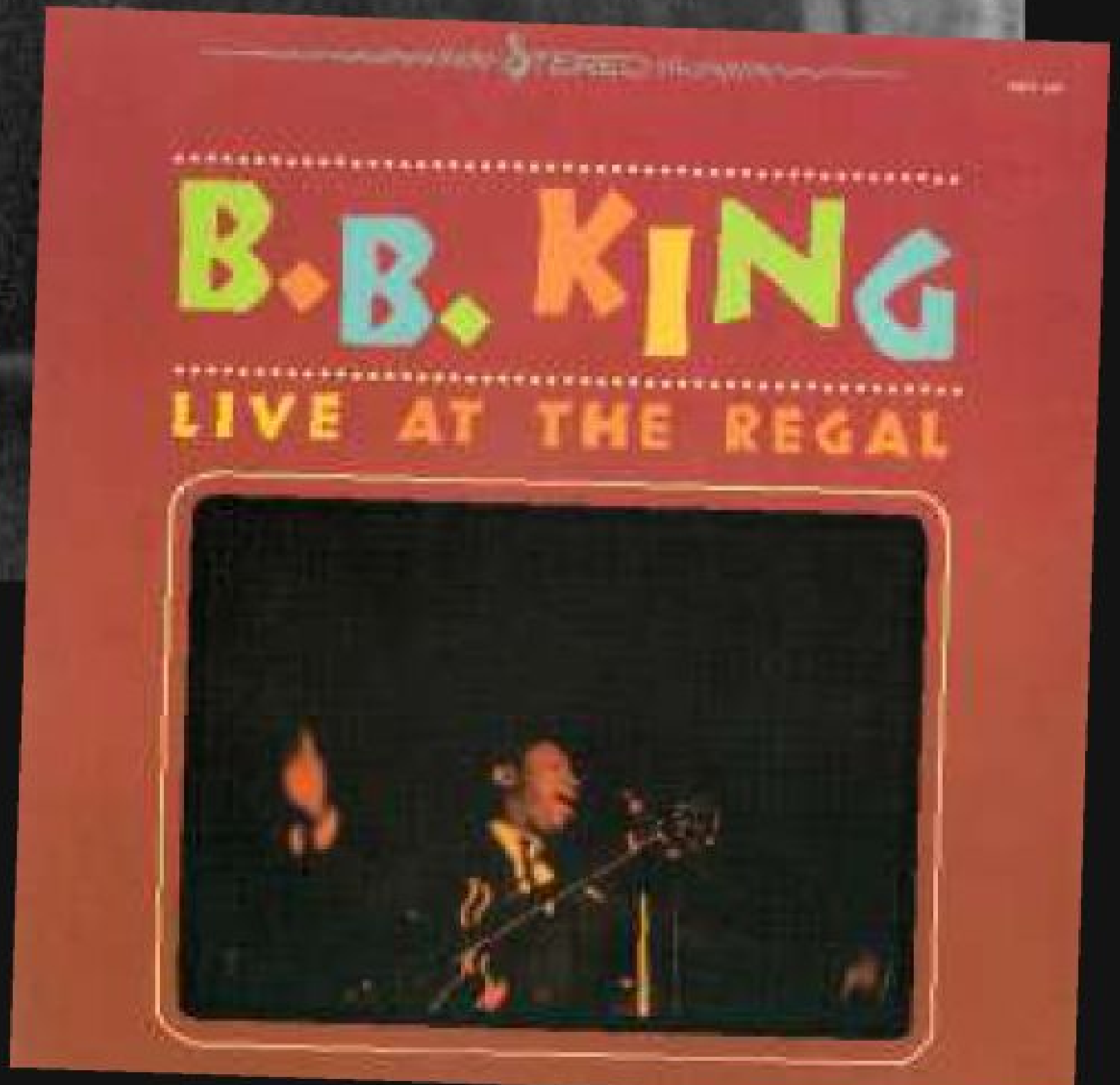
MCA, 1990

The title's ironic – for there's no definitive version of King's greatest hits, which stretch across several labels. The giant's treatment by MCA, now Universal, was always uneven and this compilation, released in 1999 by Universal TV, is typical, outranked as a collection by the justly-celebrated live albums. The early years are sparsely represented, with star collaborations favoured over his early hits. For all that, this contains many must-have songs, notably 1981's lovely There Must Be A Better World Somewhere, produced by Dr. John, and the hokey but fabulous Better Not Look Down, and the 1970 hit The Thrill Is Gone. An ideal introduction.

6 SINGIN' THE BLUES

Crown, 1957; Ace reissue, 2005

One of the key albums of electric blues, and a key influence on the British scene due to being widely imported and selling for a bargain 15 shillings, this collection was released on the budget label Crown in 1957 and collected most of King's significant early sides for the Modern label. Already, the B.B. palette is established on trademark songs like Please Love Me, Sweet Little Angel and Everyday I Have The Blues. There is big-band sophistication, with the near-calypso rhythms of Woke Up This Morning, but also some Mississippi fire, like the expansive, jagged guitar on songs like Blind Love.



5 THE MODERN RECORDINGS 1950-1951

Ace, 2002

This superb collection presents King's very earliest sides for the Modern label. Modern had been alerted to B.B. by Sam Phillips, who'd recorded him in summer 1950 at his newly established Tennessee studio, and the first Modern recordings already show a young man moving fast; My Baby's Gone has a jump blues feel, but would form the basis for future classic Woke Up This Morning: 1951 breakthrough 3 O'Clock Blues also appears, though by this time Phillips had fallen out with Modern and the song would appear on the RPM label. Most songs appear in two or three takes, all are knockout.

4 ONE KIND FAVOR

Geffen, 2008

A beautifully subtle set, produced by T-Bone Burnett, King's final studio album has an elegiac feel, harking back to favoured songs of his youth, including an upbeat version of the Mississippi Sheiks' Sitting On Top Of The World and a rootsy take on Blind Lemon Jefferson's See That My Grave Is Kept Clean. The all-star band, including Dr. John, Nathan East and Jim Keltner, wear their expertise lightly. This is a stirring reminder of how King rarely gave a poor performance; the voice might be coarser, but the guitar is creamy, fluid and meditative, and a sense of freshness and joy pervades throughout.

3 MY KIND OF BLUES

Crown, 1960; Ace reissue, 2003

One of B.B.'s later albums for the Crown label, this 1960 album was cut specifically as an LP based around a small band led by pianist and producer Lloyd Glenn, also known for his work with T-Bone Walker and Lowell Fulson. It would be B.B.'s favourite album from the period. The material, with songs by Roosevelt Sykes, Robert Petway or Sleepy John Estes, demonstrate his eclectic influences, while his own songs, notably You Done Lost Your Good Things Now, are beautiful. The Ace reissue incorporates some fine previously unissued tracks, including a wonderfully dreamy version of Charles Brown's Drifting Blues.

2 INDIANOLA MISSISSIPPI SEEDS

ABC, 1970; BGO reissue, 2008

A few years after King joined ABC Bluesway, the label set out for crossover into the mainstream rock market. This 1970 album is the apogee, peopled with star names such as Joe Walsh, Carol King and Leon Russell. With its hokey barroom piano, voguish funked-up arrangements and lush strings, it shouldn't work. But it's a superb historical document, a stunning evocation of a life and, even, a society in change. The arrangements are inventive but subtle, and the songs, like the glorious Hummingbird, sounded fresh in 1970, and all the more so today.

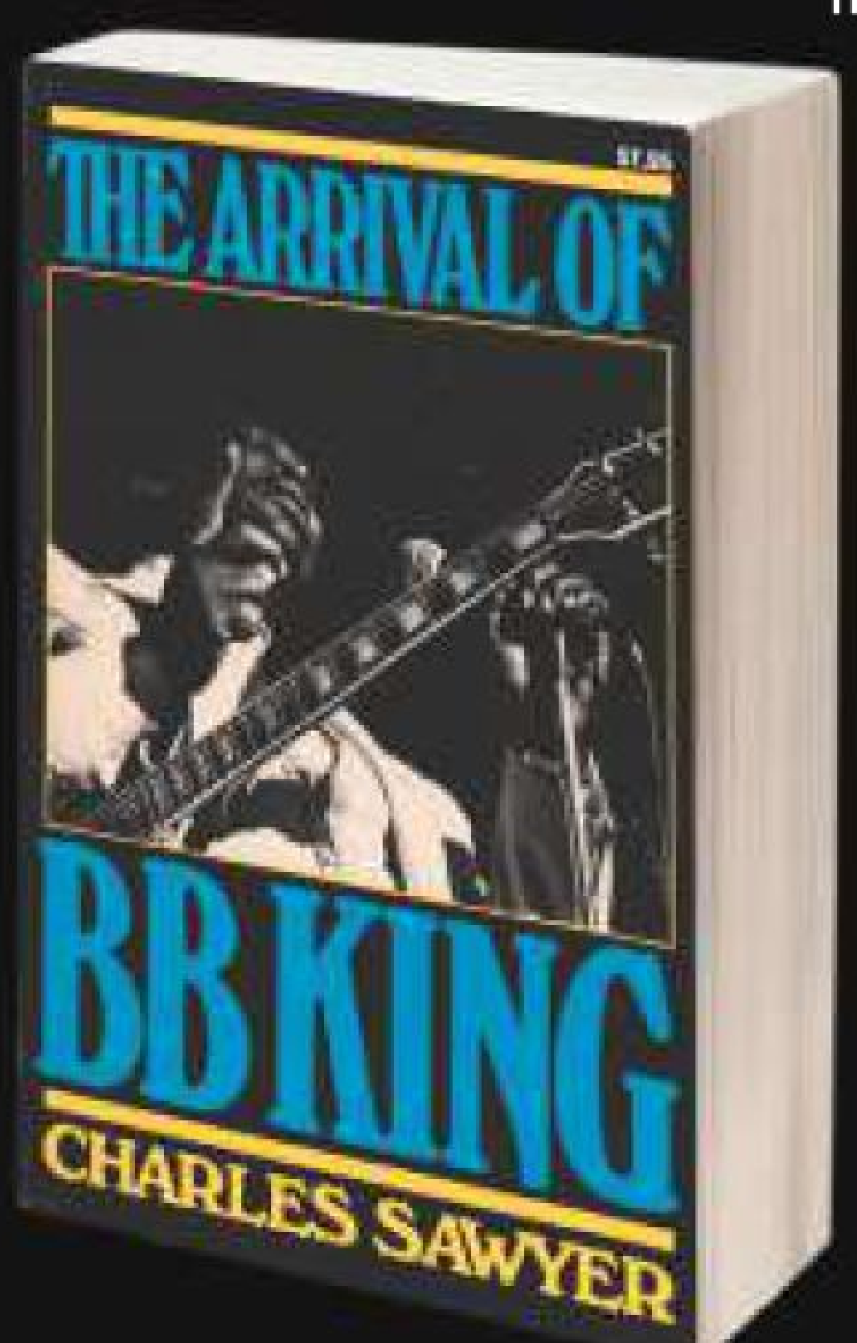
1 LIVE AT THE REGAL

ABC, 1965; MCA reissue 1999

If one album crystallises the sweat and the triumphs of a world-changing career, it's this one. Yet Live At The Regal wears its epic nature lightly. Not a moment is wasted as King manipulates the mood, one moment a preacher, the next a tramp, the whole show a masterclass in call-and-response as a packed Chicago theatre cheers and hollers in empathy and recognition as King maps life's disasters and triumphs. Some of the joy derives from the promise of 1964's newly passed Civil Rights act, yet the power also comes from the demonstration that poverty and oppression can't quench the human spirit.

NOW DIG THIS

1996's Blues All Around Me: The Autobiography of B.B. King, written with David Ritz (Avon, 1996) and Charles Sawyer's authorised biography The Arrival Of B.B. King (Doubleday, 1980) make for illuminating reading. As for that widely spread recording catalogue, Universal's 4-CD box set *Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. B.B. King* gathers career-wide classics, while Ace's 4-CD *Vintage Years* is a fine document of the period 1951 to 1964.

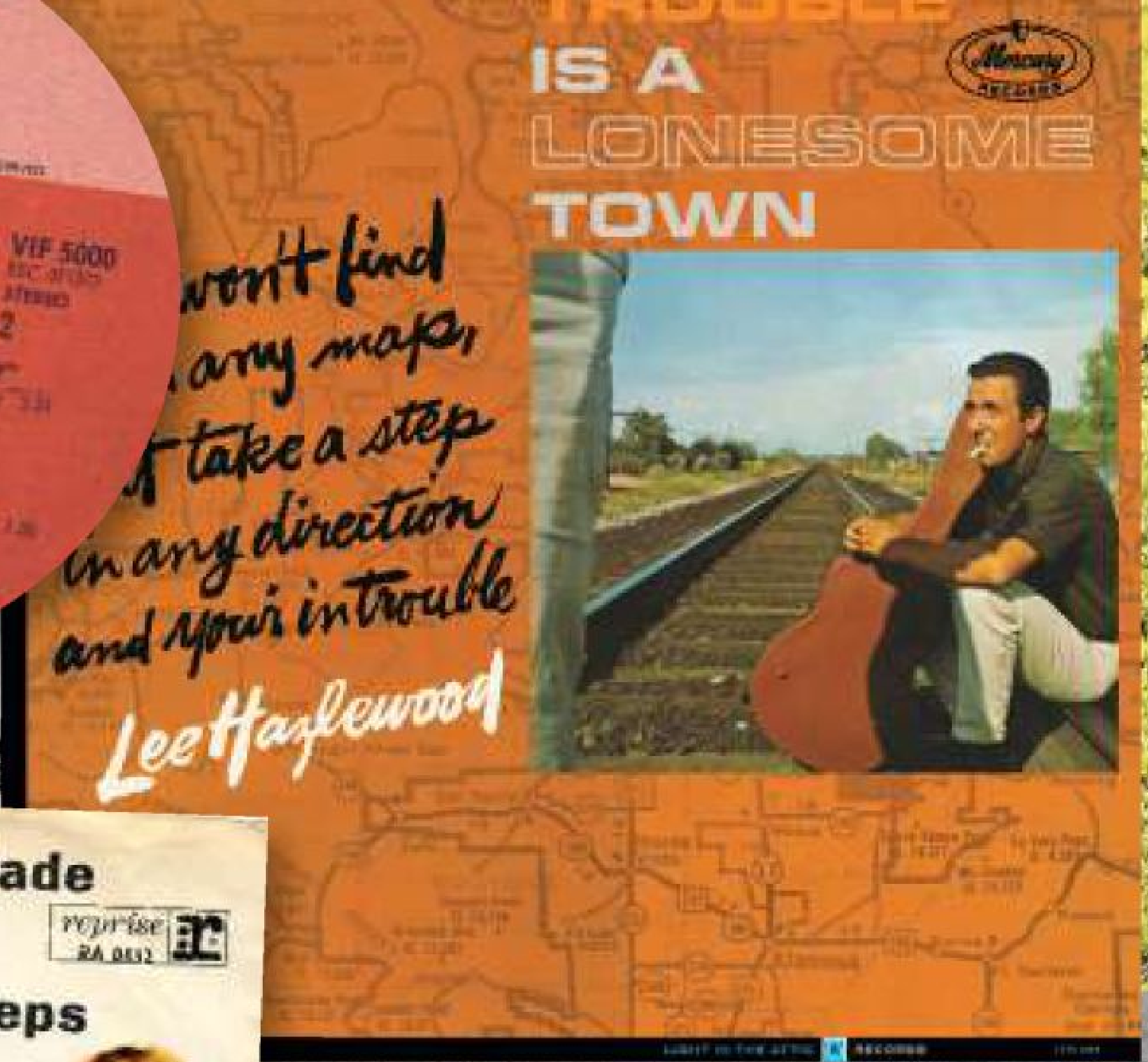


CHILD'S PLAY

He was the mad genius of Hollywood pop, crafting warped '60s epics like Some Velvet Morning and These Boots Are Made For Walkin', before settling for cult obscurity. A decade after his death, **BARNEY HOSKYNS** salutes the irascible Korean War veteran, studio visionary and dark, "weird" songwriter that was **LEE HAZLEWOOD**.

Don’t give me no lip: Lee Hazlewood and friends at the Albert Memorial, London, ’66.

viking
VIF 5000
"REQUIEM FOR AN ALMOST LADY"
LEE HAZLEWOOD


IS A
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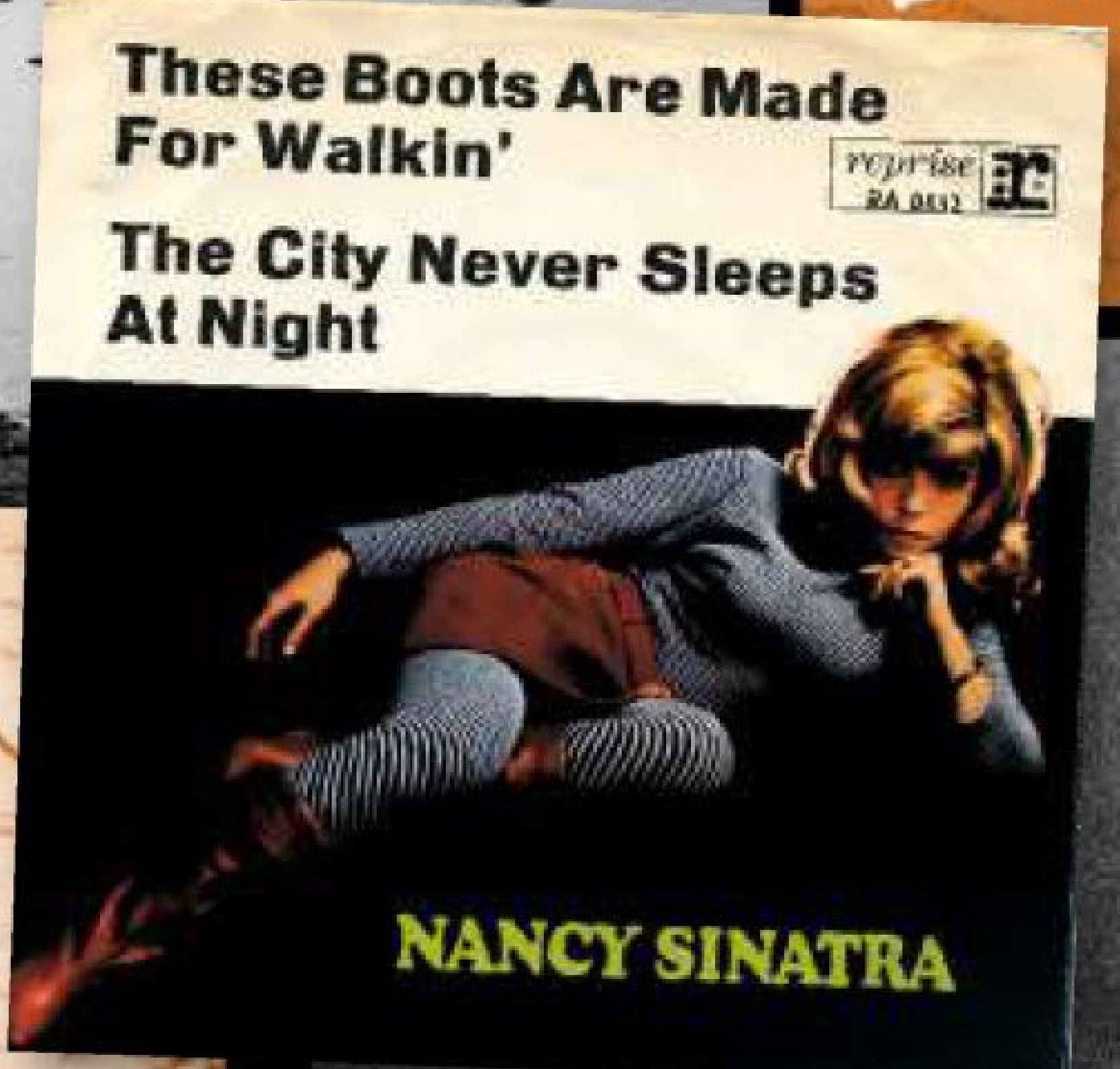
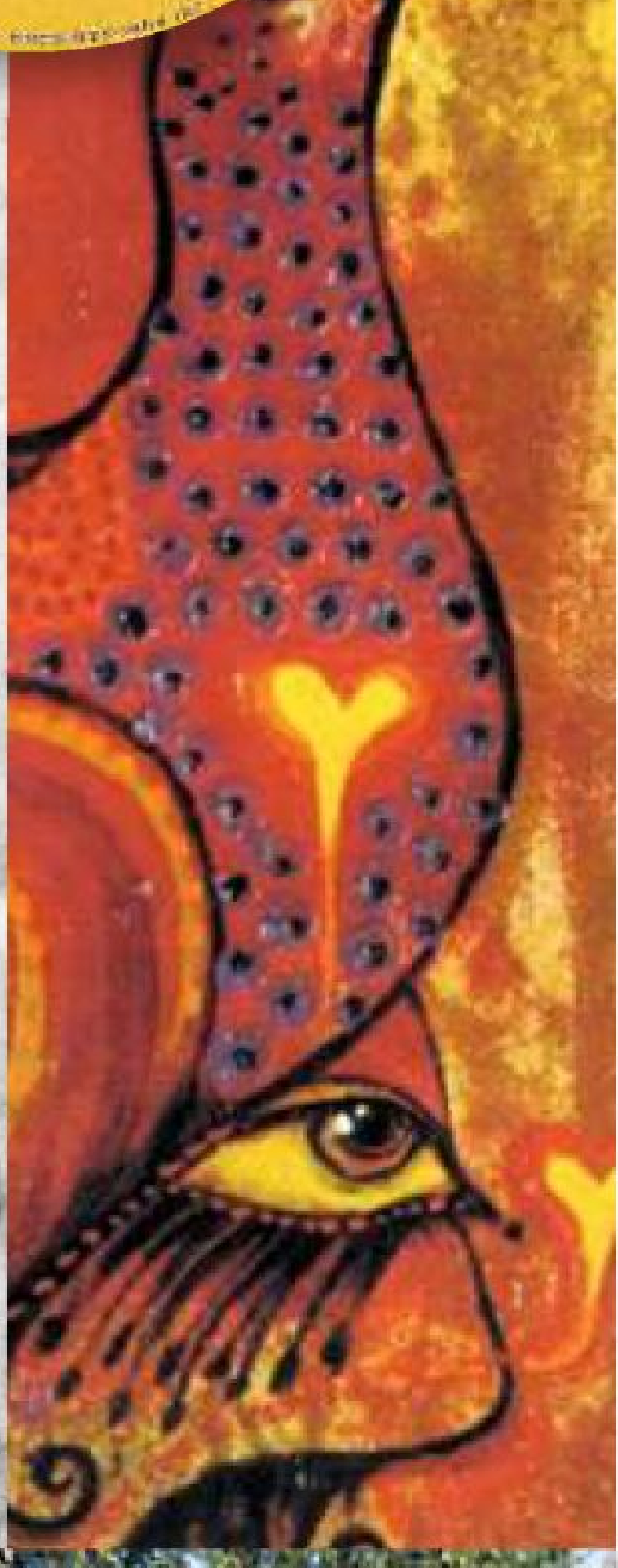
Lee Hazlewood


These Boots Are Made For Walkin'
The City Never Sleeps At Night
reprise
NANCY SINATRA

Come on home to me: Lee Hazlewood with ex-girlfriend/collaborator Suzi Jane Hokom, and (in wedding dress and undressed) 1969 duets partner Ann-Margret.

POP SERIES
R-6133 A
reprise
THE N.S.V.I.P'S
(Not So Very Important Persons)
Produced by Lee Hazlewood
LEE HAZLEWOOD



KOREAN SERVICE

LEE HAZLEWOOD
POET, FOOL OR BUM
2
1. THE PERFORMER
2. COME SPEND THE MORNING
3. WIND, SKY, SEA & SAND
4. THINK I'M COMING DOWN
5. THOSE WERE DAYS OF ROSES (Martha)
Capitol

#0426
DINO, DESI & BILLY
The Rebel Kind
Don't Fight It
reprise

ON A PERFECT FLORIDA afternoon in February 1999, Lee Hazlewood wedged himself into a large grey couch and eyed a rather sad plate of sandwiches on a coffee table. "You better eat 'em soon," he told me in a deep Texan drawl that had survived years of living in California and Europe. "They gon' curl up on yer."

With that advice the producer of Duane Eddy and Nancy Sinatra leant back into a comfy mass of cushions and lifted a tumbler of Chivas Regal to his lips. It was his first day off painkillers after some heavy-duty dental work, and he was making the most of it. "First day without dope, first day I can have some Scotch – which is dope too, I guess. Hell, it's five o'clock *somewhere* in the world…"

Hazlewood was entertaining MOJO at his modest home in Orlando. The producer – who passed away in August 2007 – was just a few months shy of his 70th birthday, but he looked in good shape, and a wry smile constantly played beneath the gruff exterior of his face. Sitting in his bath robe, he was shorter and less forbidding than I had expected. A notorious curmudgeon in his day, he granted interviews all too rarely.

"I don't remember anything, and it's not because I'm losing my mind," he grinned by way of prefacing our conversation about his four decades in the music business. "I didn't even remember it when it happened."

When MOJO met Hazlewood he had been a virtual recluse for years. But in the final year of the last century, not only did he have a new album out – a collection of Tin Pan Alley standards upon which he has bestowed the mystifying title *Farmisht Flatulence, Origami, ARF!!! And Me* – but also several of his ultra-obscure solo albums from the '60s and '70s, thanks to Sonic Youth drummer Steve Shelley's Hoboken-based label, Smells Like.

In a strange twist to the story, back in the early '90s Sub Pop's Mark Pickerel had exactly the same idea of reissuing Hazlewood's rare LPs, while obtaining solid commitments from Kurt Cobain, Mark Lanegan, Mudhoney, Kim Deal, My Bloody Valentine and Sonic Youth to record his songs for a Sub Pop tribute album. Lee Hazlewood, however, wasn't interested in any goddamn tribute album and told Pickerel as much.

"When I finally reached him, the amount he wanted for one song pretty much blew our entire budget," Pickerel recalls. "When I sent back a counter-proposal, I was shot down in seconds, and Lee faxed me back some scribblings about how his attorney was going to be watching me. I was doing it out of love for his music, and was immediately being looked at as some industry slimeball trying to rip him off."

What on earth had happened between then and our meeting to make Lee Hazlewood so receptive to attention from the '90s generation? And why was the self-dubbed 'Grey Haired Old Sonofabitch' sitting before me in such a jovial mood?

"Maybe it has to do with [his partner] Jeanie," reflects Suzi Jane Hokom, who was Hazlewood's girlfriend and collaborator in the mid-to-late '60s. "For a while there, Lee was on a road to nowhere, and he was very lonely. He just went into a deep, dark hole. See, there's a real dark side to Lee, and you can hear that in some of his music."

THAT BARTON LEE HAZLEWOOD is a dark and complex figure will come as no great surprise to anyone who's heard such oddly disturbing songs as Six Feet Of Chain and Some Velvet Morning. Imagine Cash and Kristofferson crossed with Leonard Cohen and Nick Cave and you'd still only have a partial idea of what Hazlewood's sleepy, fatalistic songs were like.

Opening spread: Lee Hazlewood Industries. This page: Getty

"I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING. I DIDN'T REMEMBER IT WHEN IT HAPPENED."

LEE HAZLEWOOD

Certainly one of the reasons for the Hazlewood's enduring cult is the fact that his hit productions – from Duane Eddy's Rebel Rouser to Nancy Sinatra's These Boots Are Made For Walkin' – seem to hail from an altogether different musical universe than decidedly out-there songs like My Autumn's Done Come (1965).

"Hazlewood would have been 35 when he wrote My Autumn's Done Come," says Mark Pickerel. "It's just a song about hanging out in a hammock, drinking as much Scotch as possible, and waiting to die. And that was pretty typical of a lot of his lyrics."

The way Hazlewood told it, the eccentricity of his music is part-explained by his family. Born in minuscule Mannford, Oklahoma, on July 9, 1929, he was the son of a half-Native American mother and a wildcatter dad who'd rebelled against his middle-class family of judges and lawyers. A "li'l redneck Indian sonofabitch" is how Hazlewood depicted his boyhood self – an "ornery little bastard" who grew up in and around Port Arthur, Texas, and was sometimes allowed to watch blues singers at the local juke joint. "I don't think there were any liberals in Texas except my mom and dad," he said. "I come from a bunch of super-educated people."

Hazlewood's wasn't an especially musical family, though when Gabe Hazlewood got a couple of beers down him he'd start serenading his wife Eva Lee with the kind of songs their son was to record on *Farmisht Flatulence, Origami, ARF!!! And Me*. "He'd sing The Very Thought Of You to my mom, and she'd say, 'Get away from me!' My dad, by the way, weighed about 220 and my mom was about 89 wet. A fun family to grow up in."

After junior college in Jacksonville, Texas, Hazlewood was drafted and sent to Korea – "a bunch of little short people in tennis shoes and tights that shot at you all the time" – for 18 months. Discharged in 1953 he decided he'd seen enough wounded bodies to last a lifetime, nixed a career in medicine, headed for Los Angeles and "tried to get rid of some of my Southern drawl" by studying at the Spears Broadcasting School.

Thus his first job in radio, at the little KCKY station in Coolidge, Arizona, where Hazlewood quickly made a name for himself by creating various characters, the most celebrated being one Eb. X Preston. In Coolidge, too, he made the acquaintance of a guitar-playing "16-year-old kid that hung around. He used to come by the station and pick up our overflow of country records." His name: Duane Eddy.

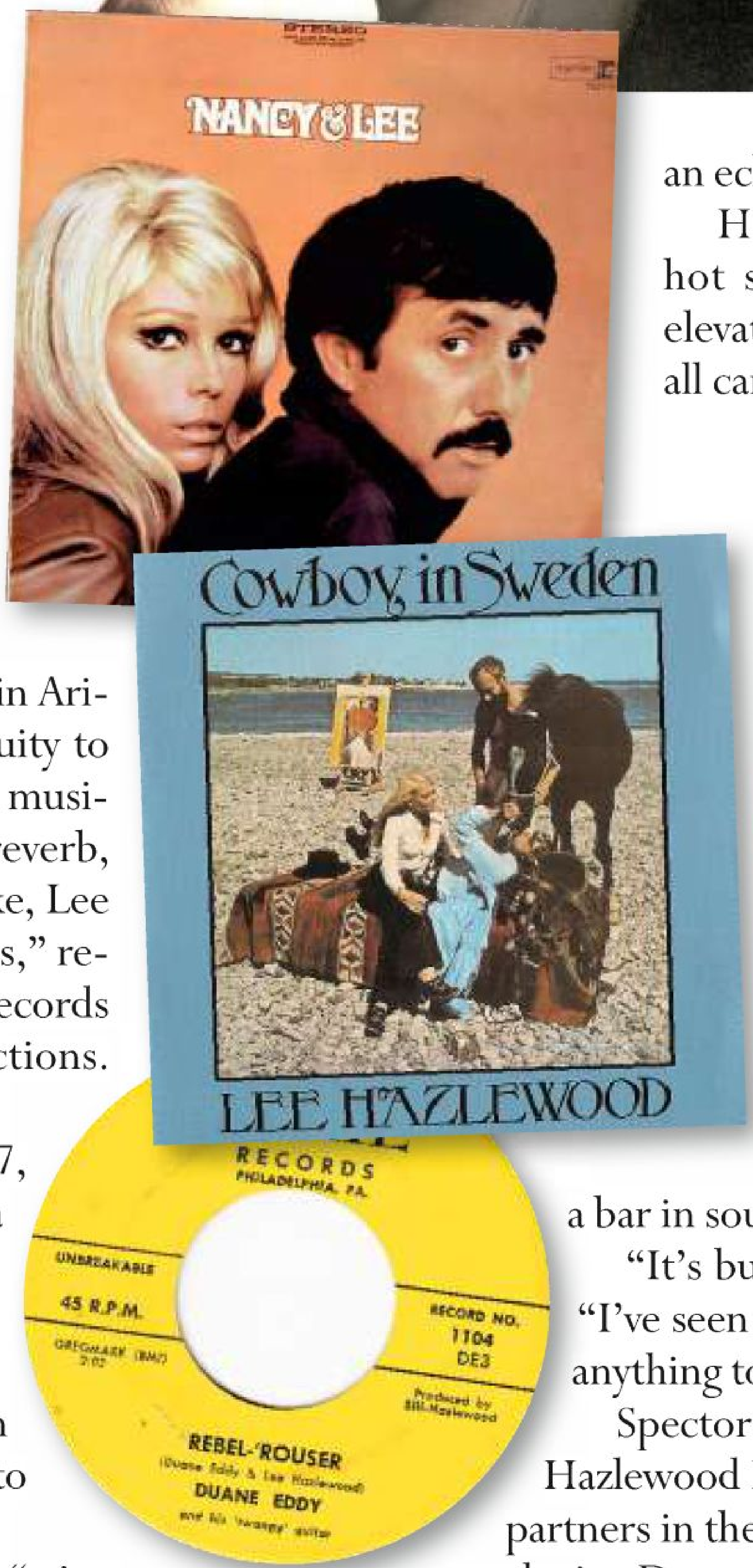
BY 1954, HAZLEWOOD HAD MARRIED HIS HIGH school girlfriend Naomi Shackleford and become a father. He was also, without conspicuous success, trying his luck as a songwriter. "It cost $9.90 to ride the Greyhound from Phoenix to LA and back, and I'd take my songs and play 'em to a few publishers," he explained. "They never would tell me what was wrong with my songs, other than that they were some of the worst songs they had ever heard. But thank God they didn't like 'em. It made me think, Hell, I might as well produce my own records."

In late 1954, Hazlewood took Duane Eddy – at the time one half of duo Jimmy & Duane – to Phoenix to play a country date, and there made the acquaintance of 17-year-old Al Casey and his wife Corki, guitarists with house band The Arizona Hayriders. "Lee was an ambitious guy," said Casey. "I think he realised that producing records himself was the only chance he had."

Moving to KRUX in Phoenix in 1955, Hazlewood began recording local country and rockabilly singers – Jimmy Spellman, Loy Clingman – at Ramco, a toilet-sized commercial studio. Perpetually on the lookout for teenage talent, he asked Al Casey, by now the principal lead guitarist on his sessions, to find him "a tall, good-looking kid who thinks he can sing".

Casey scratched his head and remembered Sanford Clark, a high-school pal who could sing Hank Williams songs. ➢

"A beauty and the beast fantasy": Hazlewood with Nancy Sinatra, 1967.



The result was The Fool, a single that accidentally crossed over from country to pop, breaking into the Billboard Top 10. With an Al The The result was The Fool, a single that crossed over from country to pop, breaking into the Billboard Top 100. With an Al Casey riff adapted from Hubert Sumlin's immortal guitar line on Smokestack Lightnin' and a droopy, mournful vocal by Clark, ittold the world that Lee Hazlewood the producer had arrived.

Few music-biz types in LA believed that such a great-sounding record could possibly have been cut in Arizona. From the start, Hazlewood used all his ingenuity to fashion classy sounds from primitive equipment (and musicians). He experimented forhours with echo and reverb, and drove people hard. "If somebody made a mistake, Lee would get frustrated, start yelling and screaming at us," recalled Casey. "But that's what made a lot of those records great, because we didn't have all the union restrictions. We'd take all day if that's what it took."

The success of The Fool was enough, in early 1957, to persuade Dot's Randy Wood to offer Hazlewood a job in LA, but it didn't persuade him that Movin' N' Groovin', a guitar instrumental Lee had cut in Phoenix with Duane Eddy, was a hit. Hazlewood's brainwave had been to suggest that Duane play very low, in the way that Eddie Duchin had played the piano, and to work that tremolo arm hard.

To Wood's ears, Movin' N' Groovin' sounded like "wires strung across the Grand Canyon", and he didn't mean that as a compliment. But, after Hazlewood quit Dot and formed Sill-Hazlewood Productions with seasoned Hollywood record man Lester Sill, the first of Eddy's many hits – 1958's Rebel Rouser – jumped to Number 6 on the singles chart. The Eddy "twang" was born, assisted by squalling saxophones, whooping rebel yells, and a $200 grain elevator Hazlewood was using as an echo chamber.

Hazlewood: "We went out and spent a very hot summer day in Phoenix yelling in grain elevators 'til I found one that I liked. And then it all came together."

OVER A PERIOD OF FOUR years Duane Eddy had three top 10 hits (Rebel Rouser, Forty Miles Of Bad Road, and Because They're Young) in America and six in Britain. The records caught the ears of aspiring producer Phil Spector, who badgered Lester Sill to take him to Ramco so he could watch Hazlewood at work. Legend has it the two did not hit it off. Hazlewood refuses to be drawn on any of this, though he does remember saving Phil's life when the diminutive *wunderkind* tried to pick a fight with a giant redneck at a bar in south Phoenix.

"It's bullshit that he pissed me off," he explained. "I've seen that written a dozen times, but I never said anything to anybody about Phil being a pain."

Spector's rise as a producer did spell the end of Sill-Hazlewood Productions. when Spector and Sill became partners in the new Philles label. Hazlewood went back to producing Duane Eddy, and formed a folk group, The Shackelfords, recording two albums between 1963 and 1965. Out of this period came the remarkable *Trouble Is A Lonesome Town*, in its author's words "a sort of folk version of Our Town, written about Mannford, where I was born".

"*Trouble*… started at A and went to Z, it was one of those kind of albums," said Hazlewood. "I had tried to interest some people in the idea, but after a while I just gave up. Then I thought, well,

Alamy

maybe if I just demo it, it'll make a good demo album. I played it to Jack Tracy at Mercury – a jazz guy, but he liked the kind of garbage I did." In green-lighting *Trouble Is A Lonesome Town* little did Tracy know that it was the start of one of the most oddly low-profile recording careers in pop history.

The album, a series of Cash-style character sketches prefaced by hokey spoken introductions, sold unspectacularly but did catch the attention of Mo Ostin, whom Frank Sinatra had installed to head his new Reprise label. "Mo says to me, 'You got another album in you like that *Trouble*… thing?' I say, 'Matter of fact I do. It's called *The Not So Very Important People* [aka *The N.S.V.I.P.s*].'"

The N.S.V.I.P.s was even more eccentric than *Trouble Is A Lonesome Town*, the daft Southern humour of its spoken intros often at odds with Hazlewood's tales of misfits and indigents. "Mo thought I was a crazy little weird sonofabitch," said Hazlewood, "but he would protect me from the wiles of corporate bullshit."

"Lee looked at his solo albums as demos," says Suzi Jane Hokom, his girlfriend at this time. "He was an amazing writer. He'd sit there with his Scotch and these things would just come out of him. He was a very complex guy. There's a part of Lee that's just out there, but there's still the guy from Oklahoma, the wildcatter's son."

LATE IN 1965, HAZLEWOOD WAS ASKED TO HAVE A crack at jump-starting the career of the boss's daughter. It was Nancy Sinatra herself who insisted on recording "a dirty old Texan tune" that she heard Hazlewood running down one night. Lee told her These Boots Are Made For Walkin' was a man's song, but she wasn't having any of it. And by the time she was in the vocal booth, Hazlewood was egging her on all the way: "Look, I want you to sing this like you're a 16-year-old girl who goes out with 45-year-old truck drivers. Now goddamn it, sing it like that!"

Sinatra did sing it like that, and in January 1966 the record became Hazlewood's first chart-topper. Along with her performance in Roger Corman's The Wild Angels, Boots… established La Sinatra as pop's quintessential shitkicker – part country-pop vixen, part Jersey biker girl – and led to a string of hits and duets written and produced by Hazlewood (including the 1967 Number 1 Somethin' Stupid). Most of them, arranged by LA session supremo Billy Strange, were minor pop gems. Others – hybrids of psychedelic rock, Tex-Mex balladry, and epic Spector pop – stand as enigmatic classics to this day.

"Lee always had some underlying message in his songs," says Sinatra, who was 11 years younger than her mentor. "It's partly what he used to call 'beauty and the beast', the young girl and the older guy – that fantasy. We didn't have a physical relationship and yet we created something that indicated that we did."

"If Nancy and I had ever had the Sonny & Cher thing going, I doubt it would have been as successful," explained Hazlewood. "When Nancy did her songs she was a ballsy, shit-kickin' broad. When we did our songs together, we were some space-o unit, an old man foolin' with a young girl. Sonny & Cher were very vanilla, whereas our songs were not necessarily very nice. Most of our duets are not double meaning, they're *triple* meaning. If you're some Santa Monica doper sitting on the street, then it's a dope song. If you're just some little innocent girl sitting in Nebraska, it's just a song. And then if you'rereally a Nancy and Lee fan, it means a lot of other things too."

"WE DIDN'T HAVE A PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP. BUT WE INDICATED THAT WE DID."

NANCY SINATRA

Hazlewood's success between 1965 and 1968 led MCA to offer him a ton of money to launch his own label, LHI. The hits stopped. Suzi Jane Hokom: "Lee's an artist, he's a writer. He's not a businessman. He could have kept on going but he burned a lot of bridges and pissed a lot of people off. Also, having to deal with young bands that had definite ideas of their own wasn't conducive to the way Lee worked."

Definitely less malleable than Nancy Sinatra were Gram Parsons' International Submarine Band, whose LHI album *Safe At Home* – the record which gave birth to country rock – was produced by Hokom herself. Long before he joined The Byrds, Parsons was rubbingHazlewood up the wrong way. "Lee and Gram had such problems," says Hokom. "Lee was older and his ego just kinda got in the way. I think he was jealous – he could not stand all this attention I was lavishing on these guys who were more of my generation."

BY THE END OF THE '60S, HAZLEWOOD WAS itching to get away. Although he kept his hand in, producing West Coast country sessions on Waylon Jennings and Eddy Arnold for Chet Atkins, his restlessness eventually took him to Europe – specifically Sweden, where, as the decade turned, he settled for a while.

"That was the end for me," recalls Hokom. "I took up with Doug Dillard and we went off into bluegrass heaven for several years. Next thing I knew, Lee sent me an album called *Requiem For An Almost Lady*, which was brutally honest about our relationship. He said, 'This is the way I feel', and I went, Well, too bad! You blew it. So that's where his Swedish thing came in. He did have this amazing following there. He found a new life, a bunch of adoring people that would sit around and listen to his old jokes and stories."

The albums continued to appear – *Requiem…*, *Cowboy In Sweden* and *13* all contain their share of fascinating songs – but Hazlewood channelled most of his energies into a series of films and documentaries made with director Torbjorn Axelman. Some of them won awards; one was about Leonard Cohen, whose Come Spend The Morning Hazlewood covered on the 1973 album *Poet, Fool Or Bum*.

"I like Leonard, but I wouldn't wanna be in his ballpark," Hazlewood said. "They're pussy songs, most of 'em. But I do like his melodies sometimes. He takes the same chords I use and gets better melodies than I do."

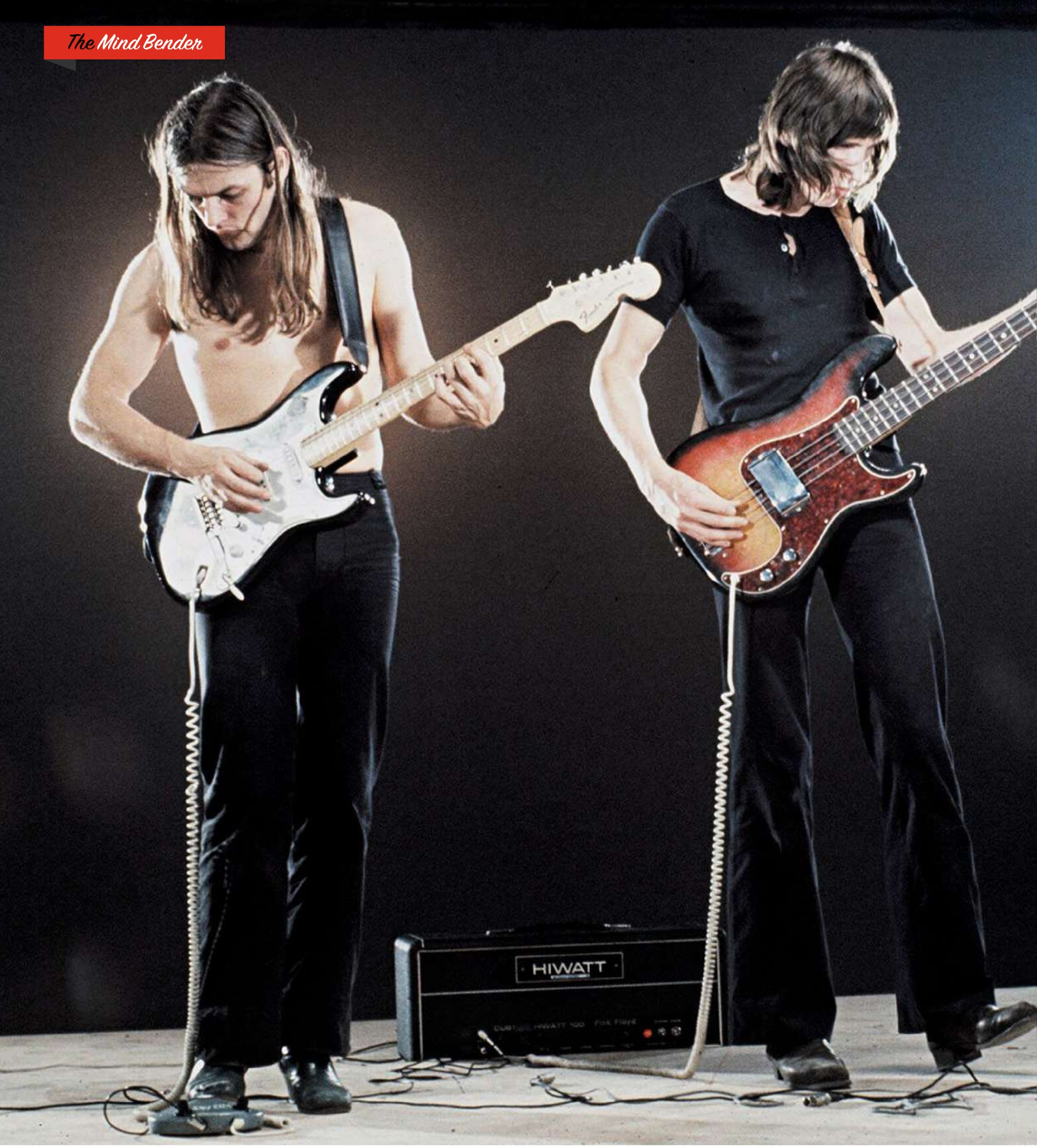
Commuting between Europe and the States, Hazlewood gradually faded from view. By the '80s, he was in Phoenix again, watching the ASCAP cheques roll in and raising his adopted daughter Samantha. "A dead time," he admitted. "Except for a few people doing my songs, not too much was going on. It didn't bother me much, I had a daughter to raise."

He re-emerged in the mid-'90s, with Nancy Sinatra, for a successful comeback US tour and realised that all the alternative types who worshipped him were for real. "What is strange," he explained, "is not that a 25-year-old knows the old hits I wrote, because they could've got it from their mom or even grandma. What's surprising, and what still bothers me, is they'll come up and ask me about some obscure song they shouldn't even know. And I go, How old are you? And they go, '19, sir', and say they paid $60 for some old album of mine in Germany. I say, You're outta your mind, I'd have *given* you one, for Chrissake. Then they say, 'Why didn't you sing After Six?' And I go, How would you even know that song? I forgot I'd written that song 'til two years ago."

Reissues of Hazlewood's vintage albums in the late '90s and beyond cemented his reputation as totemic cult-ish figure, somewhere between Scott Walker and Serge Gainsbourg, which had first taken root in 1982 when Lydia Lunch and Rowland Howard covered the classic Lee'n'Nancy duet Some Velvet Morning.

His last studio album, *Cake Or Death*, appeared in November 2006, the year before succumbed to renal cancer, aged 78.

"We played the Limelight in New York and Sonic Youth and The Breeders were there," says Nancy Sinatra. "I was so shocked at the alternative bands that were interested in our music. I met Courtney Love at Lollapalooza, she's such a big fan. You have daughters or sons who are that age, and when it's validated by those very people, you can imagine what it's like. Lee was immensely talented."



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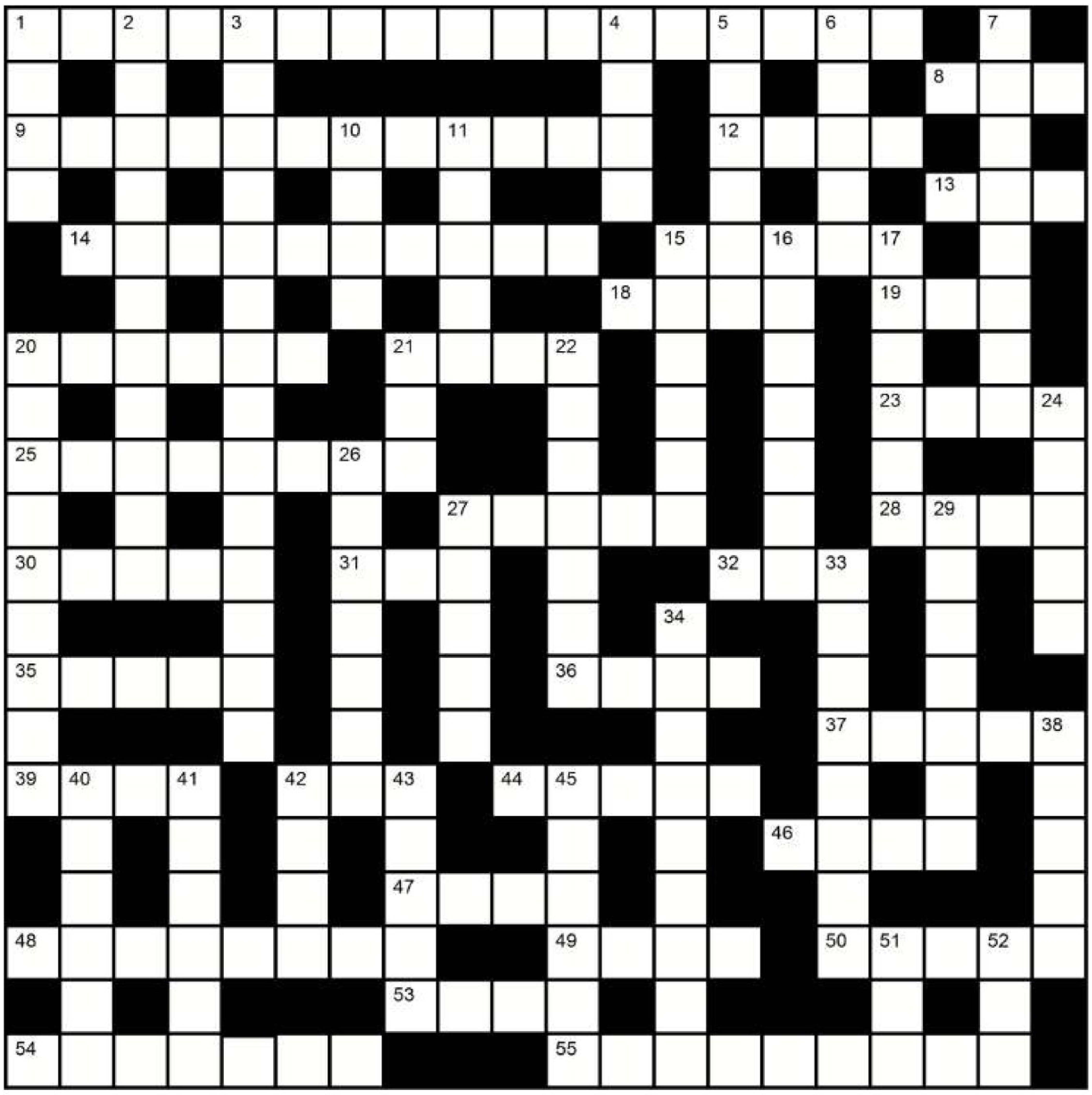
Crossword
COMPETITION



ACROSS

1 It's the third best-selling album of all-time (4,4,2,3,4)
8/11 Down He co-produced three Floyd albums (3,5)
9 Legendary track, recorded as a follow-up to See Emily Play but not released until 2016 (9,3)
12 They took their rightful place amid *Animals* (4)
13/24 Down Sounds like a major portion of the La Carrera Panamericana soundtrack (3,5)
14 --------- *Maneuvers*, David Palmer and The Royal Philharmonic's interpretations of the Floyd's music (10)
15 Whose breakfast was psychedelic on *Atom Heart Mother*? (5)
18 Confused Pole creates an album by 32 across (4)
19 London-based underground club closely linked with Pink Floyd (3)
20 Country that produced the film La Vallée (6)
21 - --- Machine (*A Momentary Lapse Of Reason*) (1,3)
23 The Show ---- Go On (*The Wall*) (4)
25 "I want to tell you a story about a little man" (*Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*) (3,5)
27 The 1983 compilation that included Embryo (5)
28 There was too much of this on *Amused To Death* (4)
30 Part of the light show (5)
31 The Remains Of --- Love (*The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*) (3)
32 Barrett, that crazy diamond (3)
35 The size of those furry animals on 44 across (5)
36 Long ---- (*The Madcap Laughs*) (4)
37 Number of notes played in harmony (5)
39 There's a song about this river on *More* (4)
42 A small amplifier found in the middle of Southampton Dock (*The Final Cut*) (3)
44 It was grooving with several species of furry animals on *Ummagumma* (1,4)
46 Culture with which the Floyd were initially linked (4)
47 A brief question from *Fictitious Sports* (2,2)
48 Abandoned on an island like a *Division Bell* track (8)
49 ---- The End (*About Face*) (4)
50 A blocked exit on the David Gilmour album? (2,3)
53 She was asked "Did you hear the music?" on *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking* (4)
54 -------- One (*The Division Bell*) (7)
55 ------ --- Last Scream (another proposed early single unreleased until 2016) (6,3)

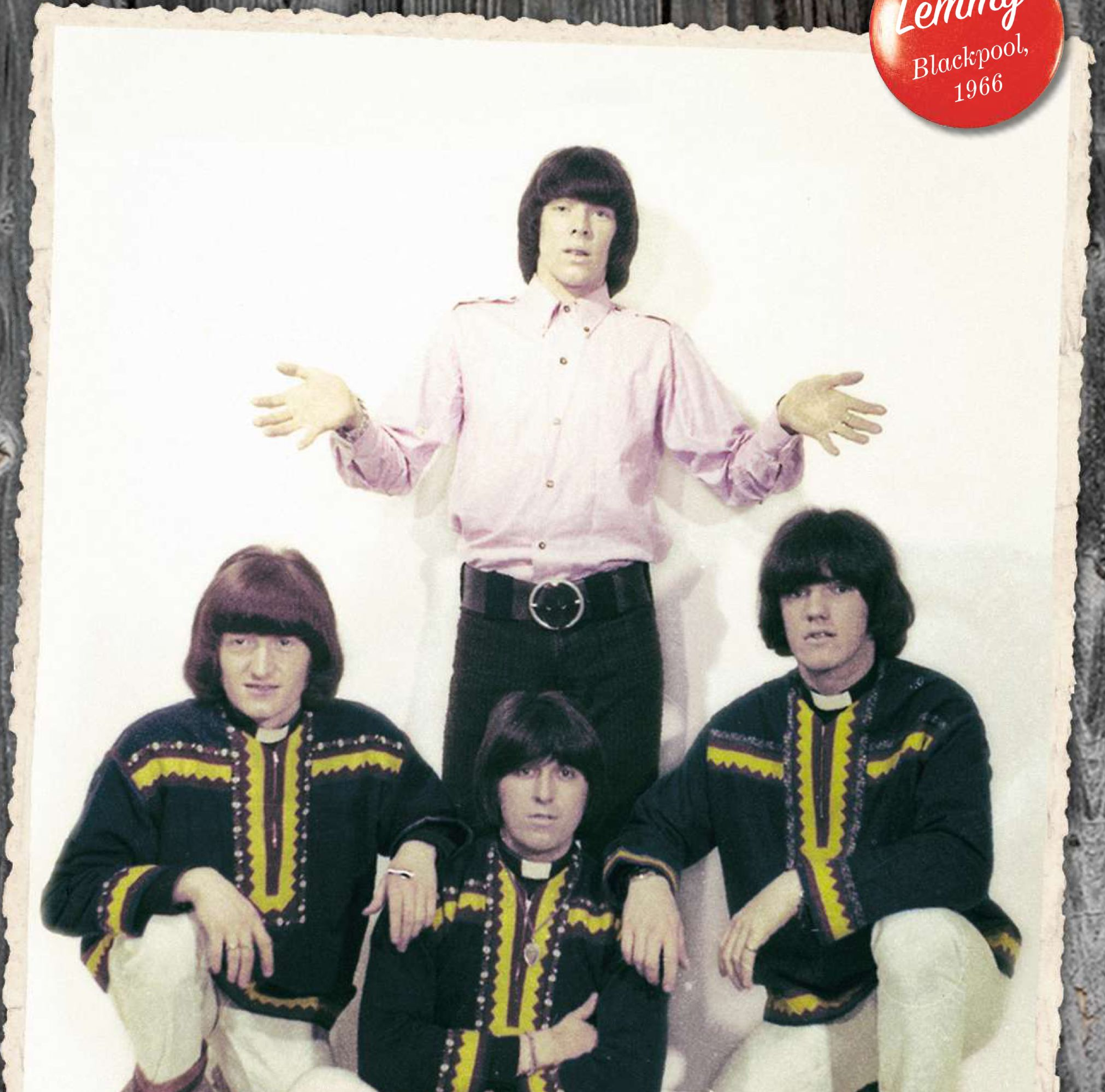
DOWN

1 Gilmour located amid Second Avenue (4)
2 Band founder member whose true christian name is George (5,6)
3 --- --- -------- For The Heart Of The Sun (*A Saucerful Of Secrets*) (3,3,8)
4 Marvin who appeared alongside 1 down at the 50 Years Of The Fender Stratocaster concert (4)
5 An underwater ear decorated this album (6)
6 Richard Wright's Farfisa on *Ummagumma* for instance (5)
7 Well-spotted game that's on *Barrett* (8)
10 Instrument most linked with 2 down (4)
11 See 8 across
15 Fruit linked with oranges for a '67 single (6)
16 Song that's featured twice on *The Endless River* (6-1)
17 Just the season for an elegy on *Wet Dream* (6)
20 Sounds like the warm part of *Atom Heart Mother* (3,3,3)
21 With which Eugene was requested to be careful (3)
22 ----- The Inside Out (*The Division Bell*) (7)
24 See 13 across
26 On which "Benny turned the dial on his shortwave radio" (2,2,3)
27 I Was ---- (*Fictitious Sports*) (5)
29 A personal melody found in The Body (3,4)
33 Dunroamin, --------, Dunlivin (*The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*) (8)
34 The Piper and A Saucerful got together to produce this (1,4,4)
38 Did Ms Parton have anything to do with this *Opel* rocker? (5)
40 Country that's remembered title-wise on *Profiles* (6)
41 Was this *Meddle* track a resounding success? (6)
42 Record producer Parsons (4)
43 The Chieftains' Maloney, part of *The Wall* live line-up (5)
45 Some keyboard instruments (6)
51 ---- Of The Blue (*About Face*) (3)
52 --- Colour You Like (on 1 across) (3)

Rex

Lemmy

Blackpool, 1966



The late Ian Kilmister became a symbol of rock'n'roll excess as Lemmy in Motörhead. But here he is (far right) as the almost fresh-faced 19-year-old guitarist in The Rockin' Vickers, a Blackpool R&B combo who bagged an unlikely Finnish Number One hit with I Go Ape – hence the Finnish national costume Lemmy and his bandmates are modelling here.

Courtesy of Phil Smee

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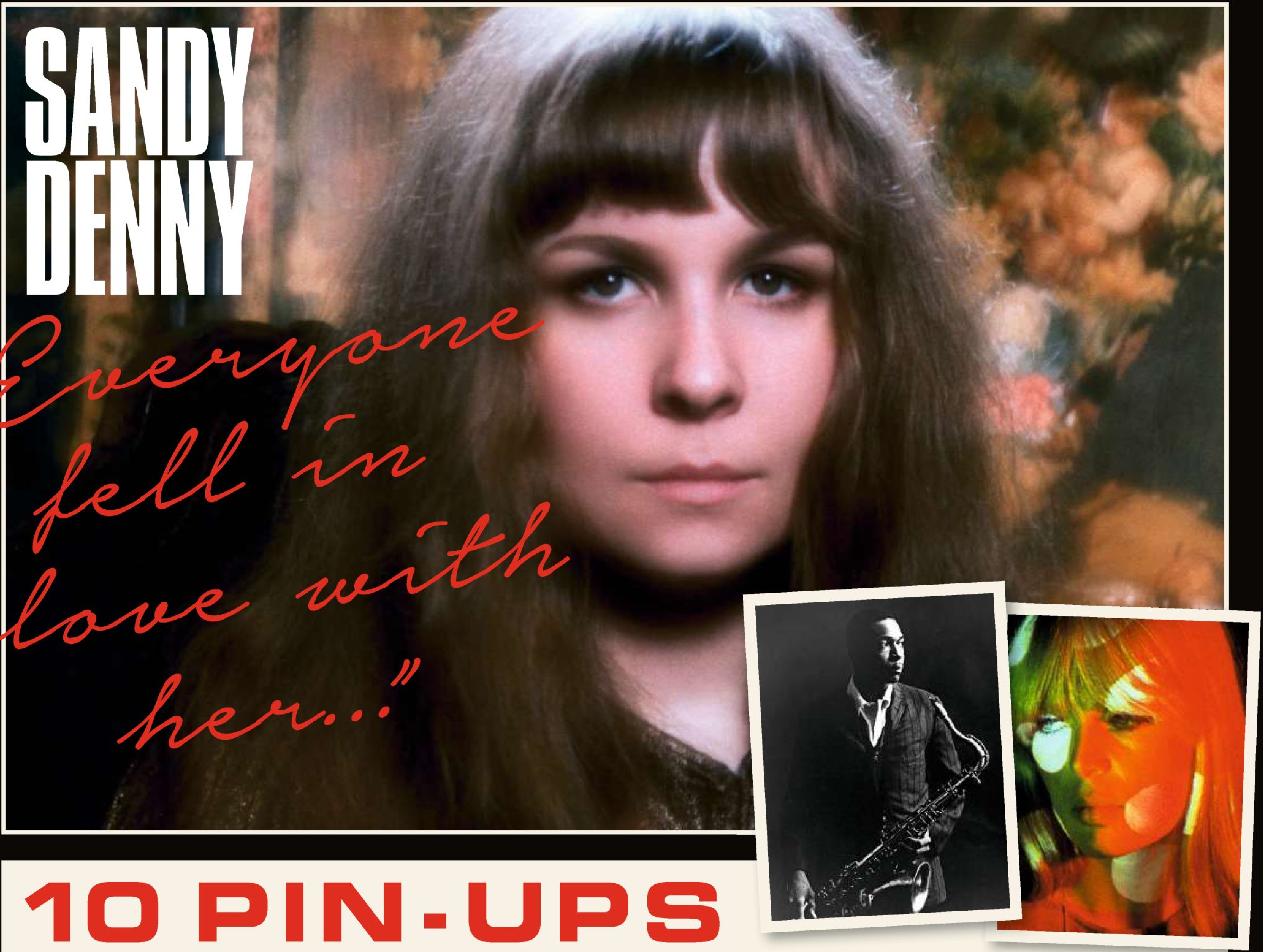


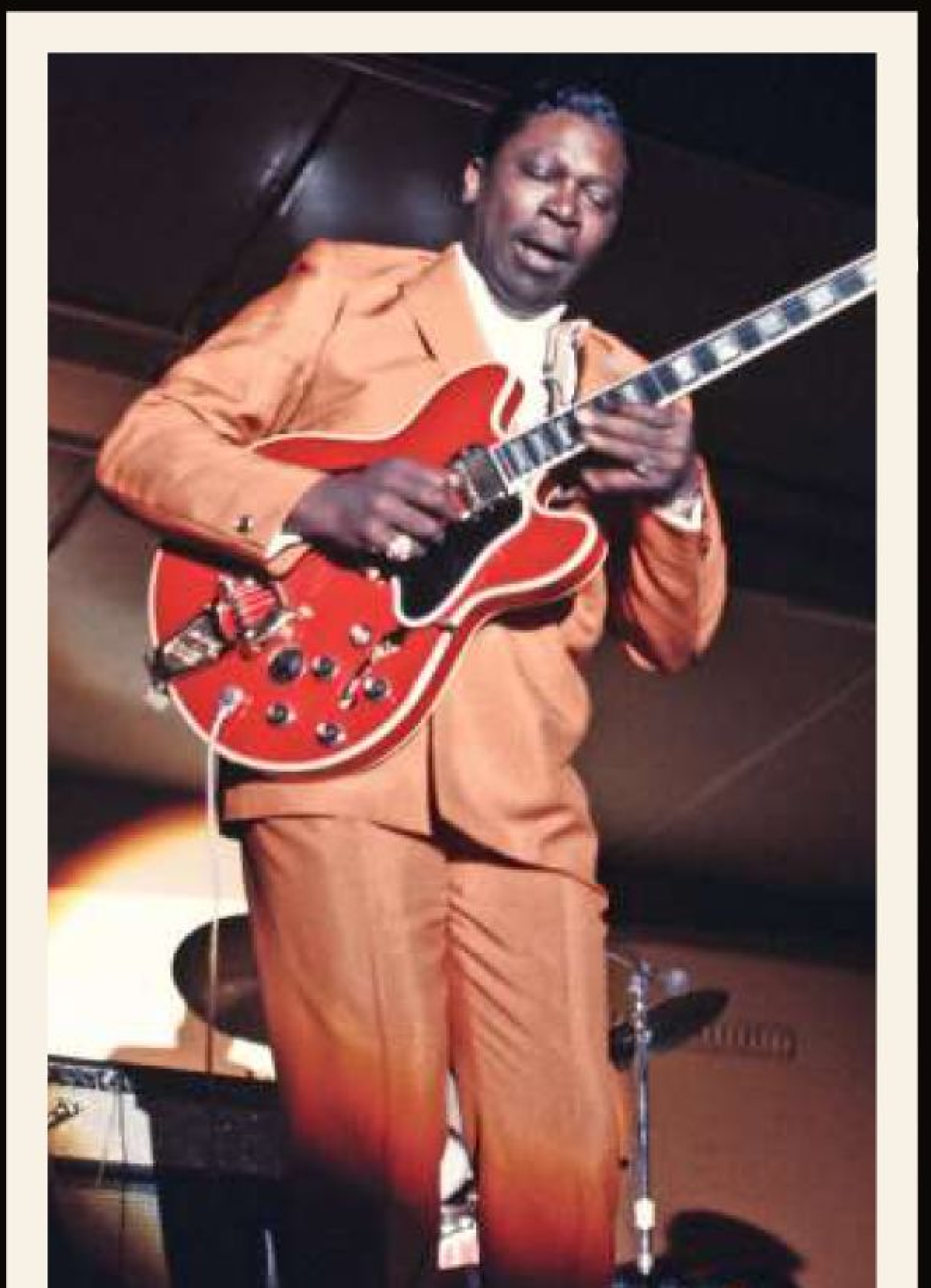
SANDY DENNY

"Everyone fell in love with her..."

10 PIN-UPS

The Sonics The Animals John Lennon Keith Moon The Monks The Kinks Slim Harpo Aretha Franklin John Coltrane Nico

LEE HAZLEWOOD COUNTRY GOTHIC STRANGENESS JEFFERSON AIRPLANE TAKE A TRIP VAN MORRISON MYSTIC SOUL SEEKER PETULA CLARK DOWNTOWN GIRL THE ELECTRIC PRUNES CATCH THE BUZZ THE ANIMALS THEIR SPIRITUAL QUEST MARIANNE FAITHFULL THROUGH A LENS DAVID BOWIE FREAKY & FREE CHRIS BARBER BRITISH JAZZ HERO LARRY WILLIAMS IS ONE MEAN CAT



B.B. KING Memphis break-out!